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MYTHS--LITERATURE CURRICULUM I, STUDENT VERSION.
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PRESENTED HERE WAS A STUDY GUIDE FOR STUDENT USE IN A SEVENTH-GRADE LITERATURE CURRICULUM. INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL WAS PRESENTED ON GREEK MYTHS, NORSE MYTHOLOGY, AND AMERICAN INDIAN MYTHOLOGY. STUDY QUESTIONS, SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES, AND A REFERENCE BOOK OF MYTHS WERE PRESENTED. AN ACCOMPANYING GUIDE WAS PREPARED FOR TEACHERS (ED 010 140). (WN)

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OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

MYTHS

Literature Curriculum I
Student Version

ED 010139

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MYTHS

General Introduction

How was the world made? Where did the first people live? Why are we here?

To all of these questions people have sought answers for thousands of years. One way of answering man's questions is by myths--by stories telling how the world was made, who rules the world, how the seasons came about, and what our future might be.

For the next few weeks you will be reading some of the most important myths. As you read, try to see how the stories we call myths differ from the stories we call fables or proverbs. You will read about the wily Loki; the brave Prometheus, who stole fire from the gods; about Old Man Madumba, who made the world. You will read myths which come from places thousands of miles apart--from ancient Greece, from the cold Northland, from the America of the Indians. Yet you will see something surprising; as they explain the creation of the world or describe a hero, for instance, many of the myths resemble each other.

Why is this so? We are not sure: perhaps the reason is that all people came from the same part of the world and carried their myths with them. Or perhaps it shows that all people at all times have been interested in seeking answers to the questions we puzzle over: Why was I born? Where did the spring come from? Who made the world? They answer these questions in the form of stories, invented by unknown people. Of course, at one time these stories were believed; we call this belief a religion. You should keep in mind that a very long time ago, the Golden Age was as real to the Greeks as the Garden of Eden may be to you.

Introduction to Greek Myths

Before we look at the stories the Greeks told to explain their ways of life, let us look at the world they lived in--and the even more exciting world they imagined.

As a look at a map or at a globe will show, the Greeks lived on a group of tiny isles and jagged peninsulas in the Mediterranean Sea. Their world seems very small to us, but to them it was dramatic. There were mountains towering high into the sky, lush plains, and an ever-threatening though beautiful blue sea. Because of that sea, however, only the bravest sailors ventured very far from their homes. As a result, they imagined a world within and beyond their horizon.

The world itself, they thought, was flat and round like a plate--

and they lived right in the center of it. In the center of Greece was Mt. Olympus, where the gods lived. Around the earth flowed the River Ocean--flowing steadily, untroubled by tempest, supplying the water for the sea and the rivers.

To the north lived the Hyperboreans, a happy race. They dwelled beyond the cold mountains and chilling winds that blasted the people of Greece. Instead, the Hyperboreans' world was one of perpetual spring, of bliss. Their country could not be reached by land or sea. They never worked; they were never sick; they never died.

To the south lived another happy people, the Ethiopians; to the west lay the Elysian Fields. It was there that heroes and other mortals were taken to live in blissful immortality. From the east rose the dawn, sun, moon, and stars. It was from there that the sun-god drove his chariot on his daily journey around the earth.

Because the Greeks had not journeyed to the four corners of the earth--except in their imaginations--they peopled the distant lands with wicked enchantresses, one-eyed giants, and cruel gods.

THE CREATION

How did the Greeks think the world came to be? "The Creation" tells the story. As you read the passage, see if you can determine a pattern that develops. Does the Greek picture resemble your own ideas about the origin of the world?

Text: See your Book of Myths

Questions for Discussion

1. As you think about this story and the others you will read in this unit, remember that the gods and goddesses were not real people, but existed only in the imagination of the Greeks. We give names to hurricanes--Dora, Hazel, and other girls' names--but the Greeks went one step further. They not only gave names to such great natural forces as wind and ocean and sun--Aeolus, Poseidon, Apollo--but they gave these forces human personalities as well. For them, these forces (gods and goddesses) became very real. The Greeks worshipped these deities; this was in fact their religion.

Because the names are Greek, and therefore strange to you, retell in your own words the story of how the earth came into being, taking care to pronounce the names correctly. The more you use the names, the less strange they will seem.

2. According to this story, what was the most significant stage in creation? What do you think the arrows and torch of Eros might stand for?

3. What might the first three monsters born to Gaia and Uranus represent? And the three Cyclopes?

4. How did Cronus help establish order on the earth? Why did he have to get rid of his father first?

5. The new order was not perfect. As Uranus fled, his drops of blood turned into Furies. What do you suppose they are an attempt to explain?

6. If we regard this ancient story as an imaginative explanation for natural phenomena, how does it compare with our modern knowledge of the history of the earth? Trace the steps in the myth from chaos to the separation of earth, sky, and sea. Is it very much like what science tells us about the history of the earth?

THE GOLDEN AGE

All of us like to look back upon "the good old days" when things were much better than they are now. So did the Greeks, and they called these happy times the "Golden Age." This is the world that Cronos ruled over and the next passage tells what it was like.

Text: See your Book of Myths

Questions for Discussion

1. Who created man, according to this story? What were the two features that distinguish man from the animals? Was it an accident that he was made this way?

2. Why was this period of man's life known as the Golden Age? Why could it not last?

3. Do you think such a perfect life ever existed? Does it remind you of any other story you have heard?

4. It must have seemed a shame to the Greeks that such perfection should be wasted. How did they ensure that the good men had not lived in vain? Does this remind you of any similar belief in any other culture?

Suggestion for Composition

If you were Cronos, setting up your own paradise, what would it be like? Who would live there? What would people do all day long? What would they eat? Write a paragraph describing your golden age, or make a brief speech to the class about this subject.

WAR IN HEAVEN

But the lush world of the Golden Age was not to last. Even though Cronos was still ruling, he was ruling under a curse put upon him by his own father. In this next story you will see how curses begat cruelty: see how Cronos treats his own children because of the curse. However, a new hero begins to take over. Here you will read of the struggles of Zeus as he seizes power as king of the gods.

Text: :See your Book of Myths

Questions for Discussion

1. Why did Prometheus side with Zeus? Do you see any significance in the fact that Prometheus had created man? Why did Cronus have to go?

2. Neither Cronus nor Zeus was powerful enough to win the war alone. Who helped Zeus to win? Why?

3. What human characteristics are given to the gods in this story?

4. Can you explain the gifts the Cyclopes gave to Hades, Poseidon, and Zeus?

5. If we continue to read these stories as explanations of natural phenomena what might the war in Heaven represent? Have you heard of a similar story from another source?

6. What have you noticed about the way these stories have been told? A great deal of violence and bloodshed has been recorded. Has the writer passed any judgment? Has he given any opinions? Does this kind of writing remind you of any other literature you have studied this year? What does it tell you about the origins of these stories?

7. There seems to be an inevitability about everything that happens, and no amount of scheming on the part of the gods can prevent things from happening once the course has been set. For instance, Zeus had to win the war, but what previous action made this necessary? Can you see a pattern of order, one event making another inevitable, or is it just luck? Discuss this idea.

THE REIGN OF ZEUS

Now that he has triumphed over Cronos and the Titans, Zeus begins to set his house in order. The following passage will tell how he did so. Note carefully the names of his family; you will be hearing about them the rest of your life.

Text: See your Book of Myths

Questions for Discussion

Have you ever been invited to a large party while you were visiting in a strange city? Could you remember who everybody was, and get their relationships straight? Perhaps you feel equally bewildered after this introduction to the gods on Mount Olympus. The following questions are simply to help you get to know the gods better and feel at home with them.

1. Zeus, of course was the most powerful god on Mount Olympus. Who shared the power with him to rule the sea and the underworld?

2. Who was the queen of the gods? What was she like?

3. What was strange about the birth of Athene? What was she like?

4. Who was Hephaestus?

5. Old King Solomon was said to have had a thousand wives. We don't know how many Zeus had, but Hera, the queen, was obviously not his only wife. Who were the two children of Zeus and Leto?

6. Who was Hermes, and what was his job?

7. Who was the goddess of love and beauty? Who was her husband?

8. Who was the god of war?

9. Who was the nicest of the gods and goddesses? What was her relationship to Zeus?

10. Zeus had yet another sister, besides Hera and Hestia. Who was she? Who was her daughter?

11. Which god had a mortal mother?

12. What was different about. Pan?

Suggested Exercise

Make a "family tree" of the gods to help you keep them straight. You could make a small one for your notebook, or a large one for the bulletin board. Find out more about one of the gods or goddesses, and report your findings to the class. If several people each prepare a report, the class will learn quite a lot about several of the gods.

THE SILVER AGE

Why did Zeus order the men of the Silver Age to be destroyed? Have you heard of any other story telling about the whole world being covered by flood waters? Was the same reason given for the destruction of men? Did the men in this story have cause to complain? Do people today feel they are being punished for wrong doing when a natural catastrophe strikes them?

THE GODS THEMSELVES

Writing Assignment

In many respects, the gods resembled men, although they differed from men in some important ways. Write a few paragraphs explaining the role the gods played in the lives of the ancient Greeks. Describe the way they lived and behaved, and why they were important in the lives of ordinary people. Do you think the people behaved better than they would have if they had not been conscious of the nearness of the gods?

PROMETHEUS BRINGS FIRE TO MAN

Thus far we have been reading chiefly about the gods themselves. However, the gods often took a very active part in the progress of man. Whereas some wanted to help man, others--even Zeus himself--wanted to keep certain kinds of knowledge to themselves. The god Zeus was like "Superman," wiser and more powerful than mortals. He was not always kind or just; he became angry and resentful with men on earth. He wanted to keep the secret of creating fire from man. This myth illustrates Prometheus' unselfish devotion to man. Was it willful disobedience to Zeus that led Prometheus to steal fire for mankind?

Text: See your Book of Myths

Questions for Discussion

1. What geographical changes had taken place in the world since the reign of Cronus?. How did these changes affect the lives of men?

2. Why did men complain and feel bitter about the gods? Was it just because of the hardships of life, or was there another, more important reason?

3. Why was Prometheus so interested in men? Why did he try to persuade Zeus to help them?

4. Was Zeus a just ruler? What was his attitude towards men?

5. Why was the secret of fire so jealously guarded by the gods?

6. How did Athena help Prometheus? Why do you suppose she and Prometheus were such good friends?

7. Every story has a beginning, middle, and end. What would you say make up the three parts in this story?

8. In this story Zeus is the "bad guy" and Prometheus the "good guy." How does the author choose details that help you know this?

9. In this myth the author made Prometheus a symbol of something very desirable. As you remember, a symbol is a person or an object that stands for an idea. What do you think Prometheus might symbolize? What does "promethean" mean?

THE PUNISHMENT OF PROMETHEUS

Although Zeus could chain Prometheus and cause him great suffering, he could not destroy him. In what way was Prometheus more powerful than Zeus? How do you explain it? Discuss other examples you know of when naked power was helpless against the stronger force of love.

Suggested Activities

1. In order to understand why men became "rebels and grumblers," obtain further information about many changes which occurred during the three ages of men on earth.

2. For a highly imaginative story about Prometheus, read "Paradise of Children" in Tanglewood Tales by Nathanial Hawthorne. Tell it to the class; or work up a skit and act it out in front of the class.

For Composition

Prometheus gave man the secret of fire. Today man has unlocked the secret of the sun and possesses the power of nuclear energy. Was Zeus right? Has man now become as powerful as the gods? Imagine Hermes has just hurried into the dining room of the gods on Mount Olympus to bring news ot the explosion of the first atomic bomb. What will Zeus say? Will Prometheus still say he is right? Let your imagination have free rein, and write an account of the reaction of the gods to the news.

PANDORA'S BOX

Zeus was a very angry with mankind, because one of the giants, Prometheus, had stolen fire from Heaven and given it to men. In revenge for this theft Zeus decided to send evils upon all mankind. How could he do this? He asked the gods to create Woman, "the worst punishment he could think of."

According to ancient mythology, Pandora, the Woman, was responsible for releasing all the ills and miseries of the world on man. Why did she do this? She was "endowed with the first feminine curiosity."

Because Zeus wanted men to be able to bear their troubles without destroying themselves, he gave one good gift. Despite all his illnesses and problems, mankind always has . . . hope.

Text: See your Book of Myths

Questions for Discussion

1. If Zeus wanted to punish men for accepting fire from Prometheus, why did he not strike them with his lightning bolts? What was to be gained by having Pandora release the evil?

2. Whose fault was it that Pandora opened the box? Is Epimetheus to be blamed at all?

3. Why had Prometheus put hope in the chest along with all the terrible evils? What knowledge of the future of man does this imply? Did this ruin Zeus's revenge? Explain.

4. A writer uses a definite pattern for the organization of his ideas in telling a story. The simple plan used in "Pandora's Box" has three parts: The why or cause of what happens, the details of "what happens," and the "how were things changed" or the effect. Can you find these three parts of the story?

5. Does the writer of the story blame Pandora for opening the box? Does he blame Zeus? Does he think men deserved what they got? Do you know at all what he thinks?

6. What natural phenomena does this myth attempt to explain?

DEUCALION AND THE FLOOD

In the story about Deucalion and Pyrrha the gods showed their supremacy over mankind and their power to punish him for his evil. Because "evil and crime walked abroad" the gods decided to destroy the world and create a new race. Why did the wisdom of Prometheus, "he who thinks before," save mankind?

Text: See your Book of Myths

Questions for Discussion

1. Does this story remind you of another? How did Deucalion and Pyrrha resemble Noah and his wife? Why did Zeus decide to spare them?

2. Why did Zeus decide to destroy men for the third time? Why did he use water instead of fire?

3. Was there ever a time when much of the earth was covered by water? What do scientists know about it? Find out what you can from your library, and see if there is an explanation for what happened.

4. Do you suppose the new race of people were any improvement on the old? Give reasons for your answer.

5. How had Prometheus saved mankind again? Why do you think he keeps on giving man another chance?

PHAETHON

Have you ever felt your parents didn't understand you because they would not permit you to do something you desired? This myth is about a boy and his parents who had a similar problem.

Phaethon was a proud, willful boy whose ambition was to copy his father Helios, the Sun-god. One day Phaethon left the Earth to visit his father, who said, "Ask for any gift you desire, and I shall bestow it on you." Was this a reckless promise to make? As you read the story notice how the narrator helps you to know people and places through "word pictures."

Text:. See your Book of Myths

Questions for Discussion

1. What kind of a boy was Phaethon? Can you think of a proverb that illustrates his action?

2. Why could Helius not prevent the boy from going to his destruction? Should he have broken his oath? What would have happened if Zeus had not thrown his thunderbolt at the boy?

3. Zeus had tried to destroy men so often before; why did he save them this time?

4. The ancient Greeks believed the world to be flat and round like a plate. To explain the fact that the sun rose in the east every day after they had seen it set in the west, they told the story of Helius driving his chariot across the sky every day, then taking a boat around the edge of the world at night. What unusual occurrence do you think might account for this story about Phaethon?

5. Were there any clues in the story that led you to think Phaethon would die? What were they? Did he choose his own destiny, or was it forced on him?

HERACLES

Not all of the myths of the Greeks arose out of the desire to explain questions for which they had no answers. The Greeks were a highly imaginative people who loved to tell stories, and some of the fanciful tales they told had no teaching purpose at all but were simply entertaining. They told stories about the daring deeds of their ancestors, whom they made sons of various gods and goddesses, and called them heroes. One of the favorite heroes was Heracles.

Questions for Discussion

1. How did the Greeks account for the great strength of Heracles? What other trait did he inherit from his father?

2. Why was Hera jealous of Alcmena? Is this the way you would expect a goddess to behave? How did she try to destroy Heracles?

3. The beginning of this story is quite long. What useful purpose does it fulfill?

4. What does the middle part of the story consist of? Would all this be told at one time? Could other episodes be included? Does this remind you of a popular form of entertainment today?

5. How did the story end? Was it the kind of ending you expected?

6. Do you suppose the Greeks believed every word of these stories? What was the purpose of the exaggeration? You will remember Mark Twain used exaggeration in the essay about the ants that you read earlier in the year. What was Twain's purpose? Can you think of a popular form of modern entertainment that uses exaggeration for humor?

7. These stories of Heracles all tell about the wonderful strength of this popular hero. What other subjects do they deal with on the deeper level of ideas?

8. Why do you suppose Heracles was made a god after his death? Can you think of other examples of heroes who have become "immortalized," if not worshipped?

9. Are these stories about Heracles written in the same impersonal style as the creation myths, or do you know how the teller of the story feels about certain of the characters?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Some of these books will be in your school library. Your librarian might also have other books not listed here. If you have trouble finding enough supplementary reading, show this list to your librarian and suggest that some of them could be bought for the school library.

GREEK GODS AND HEROES by Robert Graves, Doubleday and Co., N.Y., 1960.

STORIES OF THE GODS AND HEROES by Sally Benson, The Dial Press, N. Y., 1940.

HEROES OF GREECE AND TROY by Roger L. Green, Henry Z. Walck Inc., N. Y., 1961.

THE GORGON'S HEAD by Ian Serriallier, Henry Z. Walck Inc., N. Y., 1962

WORDS FROM THE MYTHS by Isaac Asimov, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1961.

THE GOLDEN FLEECE by John Gunther, Random House, N. Y., 1959.

THE GOLDEN FLEECE AND THE HEROES WHO LIVED BEFORE ACHILLES by Padraic Colum, The Macmillan Co., 1959.

MYTHS AND ENCHANTMENT TALES by Margaret Evans Price, Rand McNally Co., 1960.

ADVENTURES WITH THE GODS by Catherine F. Sellew, Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1945.

CLASSICAL MYTHS THAT LIVE TODAY by Frances E. Sabin, Silver Burdett Co. 1958.

THE HEROES by Charles Kingsley, The Macmillan Co., N. Y., 1954.

TANGLEWOOD TALES by Nathaniel Hawthorne

SUGGESTED EXERCISES AND ACTIVITIES

1. The Greek myths are more than fairy tales and adventure stories. They have become part of our culture. The Greeks themselves named the stars and planets after characters in the myths, and we have kept those names. Make a list of some of these names, and find out a little about the character each represents.

2. Scientific language has been influenced by the Greeks. The space program especially has relied upon the Greek myths to provide names for the rockets and missiles that will probe the mysteries of outer space. Find out the names given to these machines, and tell who was the original holder of the name.

3. In ancient Greece, a religion grew up around the myths, and the literature of the age was filled with it. See what you can find out about the religious observances of the Greeks and prepare a report for the class.

4. The Olympic Games are an international athletic contest held every year. Find out about the origins of the tradition, and prepare a report for the class.

5. My Fair Lady is a popular musical show based on an old Greek myth called Pygmalion. Read the original story, and explain how the idea was used to create the show. Can you find any other examples in literature, music, or drama where the idea was borrowed from the Greeks?

6. Producers of goods or services often take their trade marks from mythology. A glance through the yellow pages of the phone book will supply some -- flowers by wire, for example, or Mobil gasoline. Find as many as you can, and explain what each name or symbol stands for, and why it is appropriate to the thing advertised.

7. What is a myth? Is there more than one kind of myth? Now that you have read several myths, write a brief definition and explain the purposes of the Greek myths.

8. Write a myth of your own. It can be an entertaining one, like the Heracles stories, to show how brave, or clever, or powerful a hero was. You may make up your own characters, and they may be as fantastic as you like to make them. Or, if you prefer, write a myth to explain some puzzling circumstance; what is a rainbow? Why does a peacock have such beautiful feathers? What is thunder? Where do the birds go in winter? You may choose any natural phenomenon as your subject, and give an imaginative explanation.

9. The ancient Greeks regarded fire as the most important step forward in their civilization, and therefore honored Prometheus who gave the gift to them. What modern discovery do you think has furthered the advance of civilization to an equal extent? Which one of the gods might have been responsible for giving this gift to man? Write a story about how the gift was given, and what the reaction of the gods on Mount Olympus might have been.

10. Select several stories to read from a supplementary source. Choose one that appeals to you, and re-tell it to the class in a way that will make it interesting to them.

NORSE MYTHOLOGY

Introduction

It is possible that your ancestors or some of your classmates' ancestors lived in Scandinavia many thousands of years ago. By studying Norse mythology you will know more about the history and poetry, the life and achievements of these ancestors.

The world of Norse mythology was different in many ways from the Greek and Roman. The Norse thought of the universe as a fairly flat plain surrounded by mist and darkness. Below was the infernal region of Niflheim, a world of mist, cold, and ice.

The Norse gods called the Aesir lived in the palace of Asgard. They were great warriors who fought continually in a way which reflected the climate and conditions of the Northland. The world was cold and dark most of the year; bitter winds swept the plains. Men, then, had to fight the harsh climate. And in order to survive, they often had to fight each other for a bite of food or a little warmth. They had to fight the gods, and the gods even fought each other and the cruel natural forces.

The gods, unlike men, were considered immortal in the same manner as the Greek and Roman gods, for the Norse believed that in time there would be a great struggle between Odin and his enemies. The gods would be brought to judgment and the world would be destroyed by ice, flood, and fire. After the battle there would be a new heaven and a new earth ruled by the All-Father, who would be greater than the god Odin.

When the Norwegian nobles moved to Iceland hundreds of years ago, they took with them the songs and traditions about their gods and heroes. The scald (the name given to the poet) transmitted the myths orally from generation to generation. This poetry described the creation of the world, the relation of the gods to men, the downfall of the gods, the world at Ragnarok, and the new heaven and new earth. Later these myths were recorded in the scaldic poems, the Eddas (two great collections of myth: the Elder Edda was in poetry, the next in prose) and the sagas (short, exciting tales of heroes).

Although there are not as many Norse myths as Greek, they are among the finest stories in literature. You will enjoy the adventures of the gods, some involving journeys which require strength, energy, love of life, and cunning. You will admire the courage of these people who believed that victory was possible in death. Your sympathy will be with Loki, the god of evil, although you know his punishment was just.

First, though, you should know how the Norse world came to be.

When he opened the ancient books called the Eddas, any Norseman could relive the journeys and conquests of his ancestors and their gods. He could return to the beginning of his world. He could hear Thor's hammer roll again, could launch out into the dangerous ocean, and climb the massive cliffs that surround it.

The Norseman can imagine how it was before men came--how Niflheim, land of eternal gloom, rose from the mists, how Muspelheim glowed and flashed with fiery clouds. In the earliest days, the glowing sparks from Muspelheim met the dark clouds from Niflheim, then fell into a protected cavern. This mysterious landscape was much like the Greeks' chaos, a state of frightening power but one containing the seeds of future life. For in that cavern the first being, the giant Ymer, came alive. A huge cow, Audhumbla, gave Ymer milk to drink; like the great earth-mother commanding the Greeks' Deucalion and Pyrrha, she licked the stones into the shapes of gods, who were called Odin, Vile, and Ve.

But, like Cronos, Ymer grew so huge and so evil that the younger gods could not live with him. The three brothers (like Zeus and his brothers) waged war against Ymer and slew him. Unlike Zeus, they did not exile him to a foreign country. Instead, they created a world out of his body, making mountains and rivers, plains and valleys. Their work was still not done. They gave chariots to the giantess Night and her son Day and allowed them to ride through the sky once every twenty-four hours guiding the Sun and the Moon.

On top of the highest mountain they built a shining city and named it Asgard. There they fashioned a palace of beaten gold where they placed thrones for all the gods and goddesses. From there they sent Bifrost, a bridge shaped like a rainbow, to link heaven and earth. The world was new and beautiful; in this Age of Gold the gods lived happily. During the day they played games; at night they worked, forging many wonderful things.

But their joy was not to last. The Norns, the three terrible sisters who determine the fate of all, gods and men, began to live at the foot of Asgard. Even the gods were doomed.

In the meantime, the gods began to realize that they were the only living beings upon the earth; it began to become rather lonely for them. They looked out upon the earth but saw that it was empty of people to sail its seas and to enjoy its beauty. One day Odin and two others were walking along the seashore where they came upon an ash and an elm. Looking at these straight and tall trees, Odin suddenly realized something. To the others he said, "The earth has no children to till its fields, to climb its mountains. From these trees let us make a man and a woman for us to care for. Out of the ash tree we will make a man, from the elm tree a woman." And thus did man come into being.

II. "Hymer's Cauldron"

Once settled on Asgard, the Norse gods wanted to get their house in order. They wanted to build a banquet hall by the ocean. Why did they ask Aegir's permission? What was Aegir's reaction to this request? Did Odin's power have influence over Aegir? What agreement did Odin and Aegir make?

Text: See your Book of Myths

Study Questions

1. Who was Tyr? What suggestions did he offer to Odin? Who volunteered to accompany him? Why?
2. Where was Hymer's home? As you read the description

of the gods' trip to Giant-land, trace their course on the map of the universe.

3. Hymer was fishing, so his wife gave hospitality to the "lords of the earth." What advice did Hymer's wife give the gods?

4. Hymer was angry when he returned. Why did he grudgingly accept his guests? What bargain did Thor make with Hymer to appease his anger?

5. Describe the fishing trip. Was Thor correct when he said, "All giants are cowards at heart"? How did Hymer prevent Thor from proving his strength? What gift did he offer to Thor to appease him?

6. How did Hymer's wife "turn the tables" on her husband?

7. Does this story prove the giant was or was not courageous? Give reasons for your own opinion.

8. What characteristics did Thor possess that helped him win the test and the cauldron?

9. The ending of the story is humorous. Can you think of a proverb that would explain the story in a few words?

10. What incidents in the story keep it moving to the end? Discuss the struggle for power between the gods and giants.

11. What reasons can you give for the inclusion of the last few sentences after the conclusion of the story? Would the story have been complete without them?

12. How many sections is this story divided into? How does it "build" to the conclusion?

13. What would you say is the teller's feelings about Thor? Does he like him? Or does he think he is a bit too proud? Prove your ideas with concrete examples from the story.

Suggested Activities

1. There are many conflicts between gods and giants and good and evil. Write a paragraph stating reasons for these conflicts. Try to decide whether the conflicts could have been solved by appeasement.

2. Statements that go beyond the truth are called exaggerations. How heavy was Thor's hammer? How large was Hymer's house? How wide were the stone pillars? Find other examples of exaggeration. Why does the author use exaggerations? How do these statements make you feel?

3. To help you see and feel the danger in the boat, the teller uses particular groups of words to create pictures in your mind or appeal to your senses. For example, "he would sink like lead," and "the boat whirled like a stone on a string." In these descriptions the author has used a figure of speech called a simile, which states a comparison by the use of the word "like." In other similes the comparison is expressed by the use of as, than, similar to, or resembles. Discuss other similes found in the story.

4. Color words such as "the red-eyed goats," "blue cold sky," "red and blue fish," and "white frost giant" appeal to the sense of sight. How do they make you see the events of the story?

5. In order to express his thoughts the teller needs a large number of words as well as the knowledge of their meanings and uses. Many words in this story have been borrowed from other languages. Which languages contributed these words to our vocabulary? What do they mean?

   thither
   chariot
   lest
   rent
   tread
   turf
   threshold
   reared
   vent
   pillar

III. "The Fenris Wolf"

In this adventure story Loki, the fire god, brought trouble and evil wherever he went. He envied people who had wisdom, power, and beauty. Why did the gods need him? Why couldn't Loki be put to death to end all evil?

Text: See your Book of Myths

Study Questions

1. Loki married a giant. Describe his three evil offspring. What was their relationship to the universe?

2. How did the gods attempt to control Loki's son, Fenris Wolf? In what ways did Fenris put an end to their attempt? Which one of the gods dared go near him?

3. When the gods realized the superior strength and cunning of Fenris, they sought the aid of the supernatural. What people were asked to aid Odin? How was the enchanted rope made? Why did Fenris submit to the trickery? What hostage did he demand? Why?

4. Who was the hero of the story? According to the Norse mythology, a hero is one who resists evil though he faces defeat. How did Tyr show that these words fitted him? What actions and words does the author choose to make us see that Tyr is a hero?

5. The Fates indicated before what would occur in the "last days." Read the last three lines of the story. Why was Odin's victory only a partial one? Which triumphed in the end, good or evil?

Suggested Activities

1. Notice that Fenris Wolf was given an action you associate with a person. When an author gives these human actions to animals, he is using personification. What human action did Fenris Wolf possess? What lifelike qualities did he use?

2. Prepare a sheet of paper for the writing of two lists. Head the first list "Exaggerations" and the second, "Imagery--Color and Motion." Read your story again and find words that will fit into one of these lists.

3. The story follows the three-part arrangement of a short story, beginning, middle, and end. Write sentences summarizing each of the three parts. Consider whether or not the last three sentences should have been omitted.

4. Words or phrases such as "Thor the smith" or "Loki the fire god" are used to describe characteristics of a person' or a thing. These expressions are called epithets. Can you make up some epithets to describe persons or things around the school?

IV. "Thor and the Giant King" (optional)

Thor and Loki made many journeys together and had many adventures. There was one journey to Giantland more amazing than the others, where they were challenged by Utgard-Loke and forced to be tricked as a a result of their bragging.

Remember as you read this story that the gods were always engaged in a contest with the mysterious and overwhelming forces of nature in the far north. See who is the victor here.

Text: See your Book of Myths

Study Questions

1. Why did Thor and Loki stop at the farmhouse? What kind of reception awaited them at the "peasant's rude cottage"? How were they treated when they asked for food and shelter? What details showed the peasant's poverty?

2. The peasant said, "We are no lords that we should eat meat every day." How did Thor provide meat for supper? What did Thor command the peasants to do with the skins and bones of the goat? Why did Thajalfe feel he had to serve Thor?

3. Where did they travel the next day? What awakened them in the middle of the night?

4. How was the size of the giant shown? Can you suggest a meaning for the snoring of the giant? How did the earth answer?

5. When the giant said, "That tickled," how did you know the author meant to be funny rather than serious? Sometimes the elements of surprise and exaggeration are introduced to produce humor. Which elements were used? Give other examples included in the story.

6. Describe in your own words the tests in which Thor, Loki, and Thjalfe took part when they reached Giantland. Why had the king kept them without food and sleep? Each test added another challenge. How did Thor act about his inability to meet the challenge? What was the lesson he had to learn?

7. Did Thor and Loki have the wrong impression of Utgard-Loke? What had he wanted to prove to them? Why is it unwise to make judgments without a great deal of thought?

8. At the end of the story, Thor forgot his promise to the

giant. What did he attempt in his anger? Describe the miraculous change which took place. Tell what you think the "voice" predicted with the words "I will not leave that to chance--farewell."

Suggested Activities

1. What ideas does this myth give you about the life, customs, and beliefs of the peasants? Of the gods?

2. Many words in the story pertain to supernatural powers and wisdom. Make a list of these words and phrases and explain what each one means.

3. In describing the contest between Loki and fire, the author talks about fire as if it were a person. This figure of speech is called personification ; it gives to non-human things the form and qualities of human beings. What human qualities were given to the fire? To thought? Old age?

4. What do you think the author is foreshadowing (giving you clues to future events) by these words, "cast all the bones in these skins and be careful to break none"? What statements foreshadowed the nature of the travelers; the failure of Loki and Thjalfe to meet the test; the continual battle between giants and gods?

   In your reading you must be alert to everything the author tells you, for an apparently unimportant incident might foreshadow a coming event, or indicate that something is to happen later.

5. The author told the story in a way that revealed the attitudes of the various conflicting forces. What was Thor's outlook on life at the beginning? the peasant's? How did his view change when he assumed the guise of a man? What did Utgard-Loke proclaim when he spoke as the voice at the end?

6. Thor had many more adventures. You will find them in some of the textbooks at the end of the myths. Prepare to tell a myth to the class.

7. Invent another adventure of Thor's. Imitate the form of one of the myths. Use personification, metaphors, and exaggeration to make your myth interesting. Read or tell it to the class. You and some of your classmates

might act it out as a skit in front of the class.

V. "Baldur, the Beautiful" (optional)

"Baldur, the Beautiful" is a story about the death of Baldur and the successful attempt to ransom him from the goddess of Hel. Who hated Baldur, the god loved by all? Why was the manner of his death significant?

Text: See your Book of Myths

Study Questions

1. Since evil dreams had given forewarning of danger to Baldur's life, Odin rode down to the underworld. Why was he so worried?

2. What preparations were being made in Hel's kingdom? Did Hel willingly grant his request? Why did the happiness of Asgard depend on Baldur?

3. Frigga, the mother goddess, wanted to prevent Baldur's death. How did nature help to spare him harm? Later, how did nature mourn over his death?

4. Loki's hatred for Baldur grew when he realized that all nature had sworn an oath to protect Baldur. What dastardly and cunning plot evolved in his mind? Did Frigga betray Baldur? Why was the information she told Loki so important?

5. In many respects Hoder is a very appealing character. Why? Notice how the author carefully creates sympathy for him with comments such as "stood sadly aside from the rest" and "for he was blind." Why are you prepared for Loki's action? How would you describe Hoder's thoughts and feelings when he realizes Baldur is dead? Discuss the way the people reacted to Hoder.

6. Baldur was buried gloriously and sent to the kingdom of Hel. What did Odin mean by "We will not despair"? What were his plans? Why was Hermond chosen to help? What message was he to deliver to Hel?

7. When Hermond reached the palace, the mood of the story changed. How did the author establish the feeling of gloom and despair? Notice the words he used to describe the palace--"yawning doors," "vast and gray," and "fire burned chilly blue." What expressions were used to describe

Hel? How had Baldur changed? Is this mood found in any other Norse myths? Give details.

8. What meaning did Baldur have in mind when he said, "when the Day of Doom and Destruction has passed over the earth, I shall arise to behold a new and more beautiful world?" Read the last paragraph of the story.

9. All creation, the sky, sea, and land, united in grief over the death of Baldur. Again Odin attempted to ransom Baldur from the goddess Hel. Who was responsible for the failure of his plan? What disguise did the character put on? Why should he have chosen this form when in real life he was handsome?

10. The idea of fate, or destiny appears in many myths. Even though as a god Baldur should have been immortal, he died. How did destiny determine Baldur's doom? Why was he entirely blameless? How did Baldur's death affect the people on earth? Explain the meaning of "victory is possible in death and courage is never defeated."

Suggested Activities

1. An author uses different devices to move the plot and create atmosphere. Did you notice how many journeys were described? What were they? Why did the teller select the order that he did?

2. The story of Baldur is divided into two divisions. What is the climax of the first part? The second part? Would you consider either division an individual story? Why or why not?

3. What images give a certain sense of reality to this highly imaginative story?

4. Which, to you, was the point at which you began to know what the ending was? Why?

5. The ancient people wanted to explain the changes from summer to winter. What did Baldur represent? Hoder? The death of Baldur?

6. At what point in the story might each of these words be used to describe Odin's feelings: discouraged, mournful, commanding, determined, saddened, hopeful?

7. In this story how did the author help you know and understand about the characters? Was it from a description of his appearance? Was it from an account of his deeds? Did you learn most of it from what he said and what he thought or did? Discuss your answers. State in two or three sentences what you think made Baldur a great man.

VI. "The Twilight of the Gods"

The foretold Day of Doom was approaching; "the Fenris Wolf lay howling and writhing in his bonds." "Loki was bound fast to three rocks with fetters of iron";'Hel kept her hold on Baldur"; "goodness and joy had vanished from the earth."

Reread the last paragraph in "The Fenris Wolf." What did the Fates declare would happen in the last days? What was predicted in "The Binding of Loki"?' In "Baldur the Beautiful"?

"Twilight of the Gods" gives an account of a battle that was both awesome and terrifying. What was the signal that stirred all to battle?

Text: See your Book of Myths

Study Questions

1. What signs foretold the coming of the Day of Doom? How long did the Fimbul Winter period last? Describe the changes which took place during the "Winter Winds," the "Winter of Swords" and the "Winter of the Wolf." How did man's attitude alter (toward his brother)?

2. Can you imagine the setting? Where was the final battle to be fought? Describe the mustering together of the forces. Line the forces up on a paper, listing the leaders for the giants and gods. Who were the leaders? What plans were made to destroy the gods? What did Bifrost symbolize? Why did it break under the "riders of Muspelheim"?

3. "Then was heard the laughter of Loki." Why did Loki laugh? Which forces did he join? Explain his feelings for the gods. Look through the stories and find statements that foretold his actions in this final struggle.

4. What was the order in which things were destroyed? Compare or contrast this with the ordering of events in creation.

5. Trace the things that were left from the earlier creation. What did they symbolize? What is the meaning of the new heaven above Asgard?

6. The good deeds men do help others for many years. In what way did the death of the gods aid the race of the people? Baldur? Hoder? the sons of Thor and Odin?

7. At the end of the story the mood changes, "Two of human kind were left." Peace had been restored. What does this change in mood add to the story? What effect does it have upon you as a reader of the story?

8. Notice the title of the myth. Do you think it is appropriate? What words would you substitute for "twilight" without changing the meaning of the title?

Suggested Activities

1. What are some of the most important influences in the life of the gods? Which characters in this story were affected by these influences? In what way?

2. One explanation of heroism is the desire to perform a brave and noble deed. Do you think this might explain the willingness of the gods to give their lives? Describe the situation. What might have happened if the gods had destroyed the evil powers? What kind of people are remembered in history? What important persons are often forgotten?

3. Before an author begins writing, he plans an interesting way of presenting his story. If it is a sad story, he selects words that appeal to the emotions. Examples here are "could hardly keep alive," and "brother fell on brother." Find other groups of words which give you a feeling of sadness.

4. Which of the following happenings made you feel most strongly: the death of Odin; the death of Thor; the death of Loki; the death of Tyr? Why? Write a paragraph explaining your answer.

5. The myths were told by an omniscient narrator, or one who knows all things. Where did the events take place? On what scale? Were his personal feelings reflected in the selections you have read?

VIII. Review: Classical and Norse Mythology

With many primitive people there is always a similarity among the nature of the country, the character of the people, and their beliefs. There is also a distinction between the Greek and Norse mythology. Review the myths you have read.

Study Questions

1. What is the distinction between the classical and Norse mythology?

   a. Creation of the world
   Describe the process of creation.
   How was the universe divided?
   Who ruled the different realms of the universe?
   What powers were given to these rulers?

   b. The gods and goddesses
   Name the important gods and goddesses.
   Describe their homes and appearance.
   What were their special powers?
   How did the men regard their gods?

   c. Creation of Man
   Why was man created?
   Who created him?
   What qualities were given to him?
   What was his purpose in life?

   d. Sin and Evil
   In the beginning man was innocent and good. Who brought evil to man?
   How was he punished?
   What was the meaning of hope to man?

   e. Destruction of the earth
   What conditions existed on the earth between gods and man?
   What elements of nature were used to destroy the human race?
   How was the earth repopulated?
   Why was the new race to be worthier of life?

2. Many myths you have read are called "explanatory myths" because they explain something that happens in nature; how, for instance, thunder and lightning are caused. What stories would you classify as explanatory myths?

The theories about why some myths have appeared in different countries of the world are interesting to pursue. What are some of the principal theories? Which theory would you accept? Why?

4. Can you write a definition for the word "myth?" Write the definition after you have answered these questions.

   What kind of people were these inventors and tellers of the Norse myths?
   Who were the scalds?
   Did they speak for themselves or for all?
   What kind of questions did these primitive people in the cold Northland want answered?
   How were their ideas influenced by the world they lived in?

5. In Norse mythology there are many interesting stories connected with the creation of the world. Try your hand at making up a myth about one of the following subjects in a way that a Norse scald might have told it.

   The Fog-Country and the Fire-World
   Heaven and Earth
   Day and Night
   Sun and Moon
   Wind and Rainbow
   Dwarfs and Elves
   The World-Tree and the Norns

6. Norse mythology was transmitted by the means of Runes, Skaldic poems, the Eddas, and the Sagas. Find out more about these in the Reader's Encyclopedia or in a book on mythology. Write a brief descriptive paragraph explaining the contribution each made to mythology.

7. Your parents or grandparents may know several legends and myths which have been handed down in your families for several generations. Write one in your own words.

INDIAN MYTHOLOGY

In the days of long ago the primitive people who wandered over the hills and valleys of our land were puzzled by mysteries of their existence. There were certain questions that everyone asked: When was the beginning? Where did the world come from? How did the animals and people come to live here? Who made them? Where do food, shelter, and clothing come from? What is death? The answers to these questions may be found in the myths of creation, stories about nature and ancient customs.

There are almost as many versions of myths on some subj as there are tribes. Since you live in the Pacific Northwest, it has been thought best to confine the selection of myths to this region.

The Indian myths you are to read have been obtained in a more scientific manner than were those of the ancient Greeks and Norsemen. The story-teller of old entranced his listeners gathered around the fireside by the dramatic way he chanted or sang his tale. It was at such gatherings that the early settlers, missionaries, teachers, and soldiers learned many myths. Later the myths and legends were recorded in reports, diaries, and governmental documents.

Indian myths deal mostly with spirits rather than gods. Indians believed that everything in nature had life or spirit. Everything was free to move about; all things had power. Spirits lived everywhere, on the mountain tops, in the rivers, the trees in the forest, and in the skies. The spirits controlled nature. Some were wise and beneficent. Others were cruel, always seeking vengeance. If the Indians did not please the spirits, they incurred their wrath. They brought undesirable punishment upon themselves by their actions.

Since you are familiar with the Greek and Roman and Norse myths you will not be surprised to discover interesting similarities in these Indian myths, in their belief in spirits or gods, their concept of the world, and their need for superior beings to worship and call on for protection.

Probably these stories will be easier for you to understand because you live in the Northwest. You may have visited many of the places mentioned. They are a part of your western culture.

I. "The Beginning of the Skagit World"

Practically all Indian tribes have their myths of creation so that there are literally hundreds of them. "The Beginning of the Skagit World" is an attempt to explain how and why the earth, man, animals, and all other existing things came into being.

Text: See your Book of Myths

Study Questions

1. Who was the Old Creator? What decisions were made by the Creator and his animal helpers? Tell of his plans for human beings.

2. How was the earth divided? What was the purpose of each division?

3. What led to a change on earth?

4. When the people saw the change coming, what did they decide to do? Who survived?

5. After the flood, the new Creator was born. How did he obtain his spirit power? Was there a combination of function of the Old with the New?

6. When the Old Creator appeared in a dream, what orders did the blanket represent? What was the order of creation?

7. Why are there different races of people speaking different languages on the earth?

8. Explain the prophecy made by the people created after the flood. Has this come to pass?

9. The myth seems to follow the pattern of the Biblical account of creation. Could this mean that the myth originated after the Indians experienced Christianity? Did Christianity influence any creation myths?

10. What are some of the similarities between this myth of creation and the Greek and Norse accounts?

11. How many sections are there in this story?

12. What is the "turning point" here? What caused it?

13. Why was it necessary for Doquebuth to suffer? Can you think of another creator who underwent a similar experience?

14. Does the author tell the reader whether to like or dislike the characters? How does he seem to view his characters?

II. "How the Coyote Made the Columbia River"

Coyote was the greatest character in the myths of the Pacific Northwest. His supernatural power was used to help people. See in this tale how he was able to feed his people.

Text: See your Book of Myths

Study Questions

1. What plans did Coyote make to provide food for his people?

2. How was the Columbia made?

3. Is there any evidence that the story was based on geographical facts?
4. Why would you consider this story an introduction to "The Bridge of the Gods"?

III. "The Bridge of the Gods"

The people were happy and blessed by the Great Spirit, until evil entered their realm. Notice here how a series of attempts helped to make peace. Why did they not last?

Text: See your Book of Myths

Study Questions

1. What led to the quarrel between the two brothers? Where were the brothers taken by the Great Spirit? Tell what happened to them on the high mountains.
2. Why did the Great Spirit think the brothers would live in peace? What promise did he make them?
3. "The people were at peace for many snows" for a time. Wickedness began to influence men. How did the Spirit punish them this time?
4. Who brought the Spirit's gift to the people? What was her task? Again the people were at peace.
5. What finally made the Great Spirit change his mind about helping the people? How did he punish the two chiefs? Are they still quarrelling?
6. Why is the Columbia narrow and the water swift at The Dalles?
7. Does Loo-wit still retain her youth and beauty? Name other myths in which the idea of eternal youth recurred.
8. If you were to plot out a play based on this tale, how would you divide the story? What settings would you need?
9. Discuss what caused each of the characters to act as they did? Can you understand why?

"How the People Got the Sun"

Bad luck, as it will, overcame the happy life the people were living. How could anyone live if the sun were gone? Read to see how the people solve their problem.

Text: See your Book of Myths

Study Questions

1. The animals were worried. What had man done to disturb the people?

2. Wren decided to "shoot a ladder to the sky." Who was called on to help Wren?

3. How did they accomplish their tasks? Why did Robin get his breast burned?

4. What mistake was made by "the man who had the sun?" Where was the sun placed?

5. The eagle was anxious to make a slave of Snail? Hadn't Snail helped rescue the Sun? Why is he blind today? Do you feel Eagle was fair to the Snail?

6. Several people remained with the man in the sky. What occurred? Look at the sky some evening. Can you see any resemblance between the constellations and the animals they are supposed to represent?

7. Who were the "people" in the myth?

8. What is the beginning of this story? Is there any reason for the information that gets the action going?

9. What is the turning point?

10. Did you expect the results?

11. Is this a serious or happy story? A tale about stealing the sun is very heroic, isn't it? Is this one? What material from the story would you use to prove your ideas?

V. "How Coyote Brought Fire to the People"

VI. "How Beaver Stole the Fire"

The story "Prometheus Brings Fire to the Earth" which you have read provides a good introduction to the two Indian myths you will read together here. Notice the ways in which the three stories resemble one another--and the ways they differ.

Text: See your Book of Myths

Study Questions

1. As you read compare the incidents and characters from these selections with those from Prometheus. To understand the similarities and differences you must read the important details carefully. Outline the development of the plot in each story showing similarities and plot differences.

2. Which did you like better from the point of view of the story, characters, and setting? Why?

3. When the Indian began to reason about the world around him, among the first questions he asked were "why" questions. Which "why" questions were answered for him in these stories? Would you consider this reasoning logical?

4. The myths were originated either to instruct or entertain the Indians. "How Coyote Brought Fire to the People" would be classified as a humorous myth. Is the humor in the animal characters that were created or in the use of exaggerations? Were the details such as appearance of the characters, behavior, and conversation well selected? Which passages were most amusing? Can you think of other methods of developing humor?

5. What parts would you include in the beginning, middle, and end of the two stories? Do they follow the same pattern?

6. In which story do you know the characters better? Why?

VII. "Mount Shasta and the Great Flood"

You saw above how Indian myths can resemble Greek tales. In the next one, see if you can see similarities between this tale and a Bible story.

Text: See your Book of Myths

Study Questions

1. Coyote was the shrewdest and most powerful of all the animals. What lines in the story show his shrewdness? Did he kill the evil spirit?

2. How did the evil spirit seek to wipe out the race of animal people?

3. Account for the use of fire.

4. The animals possessed several human qualities. What were they?

5. List the animals mentioned. Are these animals found around Mt. Shasta?

6. How was the earth repopulated?

7. What are the main parts of this story?

8. Does the teller seem to favor the Evil Spirit or Coyote?

Suggested Activities for Indian Myths

1. In many Indian myths the animals are the people. They have human characteristics; they talk, argue, seek revenge, and do other human things. On a sheet of paper write the names of these animal characters: Coyote, Raven, Bear, Mr. Eagle, Mouse. Reread the stories. List examples of human behavior. Are the animals ever shown as they would be in real life?

2. Indians are said to have acted out some of their myths. These dramatizations had a beginning, middle, and end. The myths were presented as a chant or a song. Listeners were expected to respond with some exclamation at intervals while the story was being told. Prepare a myth to be given orally to the class. Follow the pattern mentioned above and include rhythmical repetition of phrases and sentences.

3. The story-tellers used to pantomime actions and incidents in a myth. They used their hands, arms, head, and body to tell a myth. Plan a pantomime and present it to the class.

4. In what ways are the myths "why" stories? What phenomena of nature are explained in the Indian myths you have read?

5. In what ways are the spirits and animal people in the myths

different from the magicians and fairies of fairy tales? Do they both teach a lesson? What do they attempt to explain?

6. Read the three myths of creation in the supplementary section. Compare these to "The Beginning of the Skagit World." How do they resemble each other?

7. In myths the same plot ideas are repeated. The search for fire occurs in "How Coyote Brought Fire to the People" and "How Beaver Stole the Fire." How is the plot varied? Can you find other points of similarity in the Indian myths?

8. Many names for places in the Pacific Northwest are of Indian origin. Look at a map of this region. Make a list of the mountains, rivers, lakes and cities that have Indian names. What is the meaning of each name? Reference: Webster's Geographical Dictionary.

9. The English language has borrowed many words from the Indians; for example wigwam, cayuse, and moccasin. What do these words mean? What do these words tell you about the life of the Indians?

10. One transformation myth explains how Wyeast and Klickitat were changed into mountains. Write an original transformation myth to explain a geographical feature of your region.

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

A BOOK OF MYTHS

Literature Curriculum I

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THE CREATION

In the very beginning there was nothing at all--neither earth nor sky nor gods. This was called Chaos, which means that there was no form or order, no beginning or end to anything, and it is difficult or even impossible to imagine what this must have been like. But there were, in Chaos, the seeds of many things and at last, after countless ages of time, they somehow began to grow. First of all came Night, with her great black wings, and then something called Erebus, which was the bottomless place where Death dwells. After a while Night laid a silver egg, which floated for a time on Chaos. Finally it hatched, and out sprang Eros, which was Love, with arrows and torch. This was the real beginning, for Eros brought life, light, and joy to all creation.

It was not long before there were two more creatures: Gaia, or Mother Earth, and Uranus, or Father Heaven. Uranus showered Gaia from on high with life-giving rains, so that the rivers, lakes, and seas were formed, and trees, flowers, and grasses of all sorts began to grow.

The first three children that Gaia and Uranus had were strange monsters, huge and powerful, each with fifty heads and a hundred hands, awful to behold. Although Gaia protested strongly, their father at once shut them up inside the earth, partly in disgust at their horrible appearance, and partly in fear of their tremendous strength.

The next three children were also monsters, but of a different kind. These, nearly as large and strong as their hundred-handed brothers, each had but one eye, set in the middle of their foreheads, and were therefore called Cyclopes, which means the Wheel-eyed Ones. They were clever, too, and soon learned how to forge things, especially weapons, out of metal. Their father was certainly no fonder of them than he had been of their brothers, and he shut them inside the earth too.

The last twelve children born to Gaia and Uranus were also large and powerful, but were neither horrible nor destructive; they were called Titans, and became known as the Elder Gods. By the time these children--six sons and six daughters--were born, Gaia was thoroughly furious at the way her first children had been treated by their father. Determined that he should not treat her new children the same way, she called the Titans to her and asked their help.

"Unless you do something, and do it now," she told them, "your father may perhaps deal with you as he has dealt with the others. He is not to be trusted. You must lay a trap for him. There is no time to lose."

But in spite of this warning, none of the Titans was brave enough to plot against their father, and they all made excuses of one sort or another. All except one: Cronus, the youngest of the twelve. Quietly, without telling anyone of his plan, he hid himself and waited for his father Uranus to pass by. Then he leaped out and fell upon him with a sharp sickle given him by his mother, and dealt him crippling wounds with it.

Uranus, taken by surprise, howled in anguish and in rage, cursing his son.

"One day you will pay dearly for this," he shouted, "for it will happen that you will be overthrown by your own child just as I have been overthrown by you!"

Then he fled up as high as he could go, for he had been badly wounded, and to this day the sky has never again come near the earth. His blood, however, fell to the ground, and from it there sprang up the Giants, and the hideous creatures called the Erinyes, or Furies, whose hair was a mass of live squirming snakes, whose eyes shed bloody tears, and whose task it was to pursue sinners from place to place until they were punished.

Gaia was pleased with Cronus and felt that Uranus had only got what he deserved, but the pleasure soon turned to displeasure as she discovered that Cronus had no intention of freeing her six monstrous sons from their imprisonment inside the earth. Cronus merely ignored his mother's anger, however, and took his father's place as ruler of the world, dividing the power among his brothers the Titans. The world was round and flat, like a big plate, and was divided in half by the Sea, and surrounded by the great River Ocean, which flowed around the edge in a clock-wise direction. Cronus gave this river to his brother Oceanus, whose offspring became the smaller rivers of the earth and the Water Nymphs. To his brother Hyperion, Cronus gave control of all the light in the world. Hyperion's offspring, the Sun, the Moon, and the Dawn, rose each day out of the River Ocean and drove across the sky in their light-giving chariots.

THE GOLDEN AGE

Thus the world was ruled by the Titans for many years. During the Titans' reign the first earthly creatures were created by the Titan brothers Prometheus and Epimetheus (whose names mean Forethought and Afterthought). They were sons of Iapetus, one of Cronus's brothers. It was decided that Eipmetheus would do the actual labor, and that Prometheus would survey his work when it was done. But Epimetheus, as his name (Afterthought) shows, was not used to planning ahead. So, thinking that he would save the best for last, he set about making the birds, the fish, and the animals first. Not wishing to create anything that wasn't of the very best, he took great pains to endow each of his creations with exceptional qualities of one sort or another: strength to the bull, cunning to the fox, swiftness to the antelope, wings to the eagle, a leathery hide to the rhinoceros, a hard shell to the turtle, claws to the tiger, sharp horns to the buffalo,. and many other things. But by the time he had finished all this and was ready to create man, he found to his dismay that there were no fine gifts left. In his eagerness, he had given them all to the animals. He was dreadfully upset, as well as astonished, by this turn of events, so he rushed to his brother Prometheus and said,

"Brother, help me. I am now ready to make man, but I have run out of gifts to give him. What shall I do?"

"You have indeed given away nearly the whole supply of good things through your carelessness," Prometheus replied severely, "but all is not lost. We can still give man something which will make him better than all the other animals: we will give him a noble shape—like that of the gods themselves--and will will give him a mind and the power to think, and this will more than make up for his lack of strength and outer protection."

And with that Prometheus took up a bit of clay and mixed it with rain water and moulded it in the likeness of the gods, only smaller, and breathed life into it. And so he made man.

These first men lived in what was called the Golden Age. They were a happy race, knowing nothing of evil or sorrow. The earth freely gave them all the food and shelter they needed; spring was the only season; flowers bloomed continually, and skies were always blue. But woman had not yet been created, and so these happy people died out after a time. Their spirits, however, remained behind, hovering in the air to watch over all good people who came after them.

WAR IN HEAVEN

From the moment he had taken upon himself the duties of ruler of the world, Cronus had never forgotten his father's prediction that he would one day be overthrown by one of his children. So each time his wife Rhea bore him a child, he immediately swallowed it, hoping to keep the prophecy from coming true. In this way he got rid of his daughters Hestia, Demeter, and Hera, and his sons Hades and Poseidon. But shortly before his sixth child was to be born, Rhea went to her mother, Gaia, and said,

"Mother, I have made up my mind that my husband is not going to swallow any more of our children. It seems to me both pointless and cruel, and I have no wish to see it happen again. But I don't know how to prevent it."

"My child," said Gaia, "I, too, know what it is to have to stand by and see my children mistreated. I will gladly help you. You must go at once to a secret cave on Mount Ida, which is on the island of Crete, and when your child is born leave him there. The mountain nymphs will care for him. Then you must return to Cronus. But if you will give him a stone wrapped in soft blankets, he will swallow that and be none the wiser."

Rhea thanked her mother and followed her advice exactly. Everything happened just as she had said it would; Cronus swallowed down the stone and suspected nothing.

But in Crete his son Zeus grew quietly to young manhood, watched over by the nymphs and the shepherds of the island, and by the time he was full grown his mother, Rhea, had thought of a clever plan by which to be revenged on Cronus for his treatment of their first five children. She sent a messenger to Zeus in the form of Metis, who was also called Prudence. Metis showed him how to mix a powerful poison from various herbs, and then told him to go and hide in Cronus's palace.

"Wait until he is at dinner and has had a great deal of wine," Metis told Zeus, "then slip out when he isn't looking and pour the mixture into his cup."

Zeus did just as he was told, and no sooner had Cronus emptied his cup than he became very ill and vomited up the stone and his five elder children. Zeus and his two brothers Hades and Poseidon lost no time in tying their father to his chair. But before they could do anything else, he came to his senses again and began shouting furiously for his brother Titans to come to his rescue.

"Help! Brothers!" he bellowed, his face black with rage. "These young gods have played me a foul trick which I promise they'll soon regret! Come and untie me so that I can teach them a lesson!"

Then there followed a terrible struggle between the Elder Gods, led by the great Titan Atlas, and the children of Cronus, led by Zeus. At first the Titans, older and more numerous, beat back the younger gods, who fled to the top of Mount Olympus (which afterward became their home) to recover their strength before attacking again. The war raged on for years and years. Finally Zeus decided to ask the advice of the one who had really got him into the war in the first place--Gaia, who had thought up the plan that saved him from being swallowed by his father. So he went to see his grandmother Gaia.

"You got me into this," he complained somewhat crossly, "and I think it has gone on quite long enough. Now tell me what I should do, if you can, for neither side is winning."

But Gaia was provoked by Zeus's tone of voice, and even though she was willing to help, she decided to make it difficult for him by giving a mysterious answer:

"Until you free my first-born, as you have freed the first-born of your mother, victory shall not be yours."

Of course Zeus understood none of this, but Gaia would say no more. So he had to return to his brothers and sisters, even angrier than before, and the war went on.

As it happened, there was one Titan who refused to side with his brothers. This was Prometheus. He alone had the power to see into the future (remember that his name meant Forethought), and he knew that the reign of the Titans was drawing to a close. He knew that it would be best if the Titans would step down peacefully, for then the younger gods would not punish them. But he could not get his brothers to agree to this. At last there was nothing left for him to do but go to Zeus and offer to help him, so that the long war could be brought to an end.

"Not long ago," he said, "Gaia, our Mother Earth, gave you some advice which you could not understand. Now I have come to explain it to you."

Then he told Zeus how, many years before, Uranus had shut his first six children up inside the earth. Gaia had never forgiven him for this, nor had she forgiven Cronus for not letting them out when he became ruler of the world. But if Zeus would go down to the underworld and bring these monsters back with him, they would fight on his side and help to overthrow their younger brothers, the Titans.

At once Zeus, taking Prometheus with him, went down into the deepest part of the Underworld, called Tartarus, and freed the hundred-handed monsters, who threw their huge strength against the Titans, and the Cyclopes, who forged armor and weapons for Zeus and his brothers: a helmet of invisibility for Hades; a three-pronged spear, or trident, for Poseidon; and for Zeus himself, the mighty thunderbolt.

Then all at once the war was over. Many of the Titans were flung down into Tartarus. A few, including Cronus, managed to escape, though they were never heard of again. Atlas, their leader, was made to stand forever at the western edge of the world, holding the sky aloft upon his shoulders. But one or two of the women, and Prometheus, were saved.

THE REIGN OF ZEUS

After the end of the war, Zeus and his brothers and sisters and their offspring made their home on Mount Olympus and became known as the Olympian Gods. There were twelve of them, each with a different disposition and different duties. Zeus and his brothers Poseidon and Hades agreed to rule the world together, but they drew lots to see how the realms of the world should be divided. In this way Zeus became ruler of the sky, Poseidon became ruler of the sea, and Hades became ruler of the Underworld.

Since Zeus was the one who had led the younger gods in battle against the Titans, it was decided that he should continue to be their leader, or king. His power was greater than that of any of the other gods, and he kept his family in line by threatening to throw one of his terrible thunderbolts at them.

Poseidon, the second most powerful god, had a bad temper and would pick an argument with nearly anyone. When he was angry, which was fairly often, he would stir up terrible storms on the ocean with the trident given him by the Cyclopes. But when he wished, he could drive over the surface of the sea in his golden chariot drawn by great horses, and waves would disappear and the water would become as smooth as glass. As a rule, he spent more time on Mount Olympus than in his great underwater palace.

Hades, on the other hand, did not often leave his dark home under the earth. He was both King of the Dead and God of Wealth, and he ruled his kingdom strictly but with justice. However, hewas so silent and stony-hearted that the other gods did not like to spend much time in his company.

Zeus's queen was his sister Hera. She was the Goddess of Marriage and the protector of married women, but she set them a very bad example, for she and her husband fought constantly. She never forgot an injury or insult, and she would do everything she could to get even with anyone who mistreated her. All in all, she was not a pleasant goddess.

Athena had only one parent: her father, Zeus. It happened that one day he suddenly felt a fearful headache and asked Prometheus, whom he had made his chief adviser, to cut an opening in his skull, hoping that this would relieve the pain. Prometheus struck him a great blow on the head with a sharp ax, and no sooner was this done than out sprang Athena, fully armed. She became Goddess of Wisdom and Goddess of the city of Athens. She was also a warrior-goddess, though she did not really enjoy battles and fought only when she had to. She was tall, with flashing gray eyes, and was the favorite child of Zeus, who would let her carry his terrible weapon, the thunderbolt. No one else was ever allowed to do this.

When Hera saw that Zeus had managed to have a child all by himself she flew into a rage and, not to be outdone, she at once produced Hephaestus. But he was born lame, and his disgusted mother tossed him out of Heaven and down to earth. He fell for nine days and nine nights before he finally landed on the island of Lemnos. There he soon showed that he was wonderfully talented at forging beautiful and useful things out of metal. When Hera discovered this, she brought him back to Olympus, where he was honored among the gods, in spite of being less handsome than the other gods.

Apollo and his sister Artemis were the twin children of Zeus and Leto, of the race of Titans. Apollo was perhaps the most beautiful of the gods. He was the God of Light--especially of the Sun--as well as of Prophecy and of Music. He was also the Archer-god, carrying a silver bow.

Artemis, his sister, was the Goddess of the Moon, just as he was the Sun-god, but she was also Goddess of the Hunt and of Wild Creatures. Like Apollo, whe carried a silver bow and silver arrows. She was gentle and modest, and watched over all little children. Besides this, both she and her brother could, when they wished, heal sicknesses of all sorts.

Hermes, the Messenger of the Gods, was the son of Zeus and Atlas's daughter Maia. He wore winged sandals and a winged cap, which enabled him to travel very swiftly. When he was still a boy, he invented the lyre by putting tight strings across a tortoise shell. Soon afterward he gave it as a peace offering to Apollo, who was angry with him for having stolen some cattle and lied about it. Zeus made him promise never to steal or lie again, and then he gave him the job of guiding dead souls down to the Kingdom of the Dead. Hermes, because he was a clever bargainer, was also God of Merchants.

Aphrodite was the Goddess of Love and Beauty. She was born apparently all by herself, rising out of the beautiful white sea foam just off the island of Cythera. She had a wonderful girdle, or sash, which made everyone fall madly in love with her; she was jealous of this sash, and could not often be persuaded to lend it to anyone else. Strangely enough, Zeus caused this most beautiful of goddesses to be married to the ugliest of gods, Hephaestus. He did this to reward Hephaestus for making thunderbolts for him. Aphrodite loved to laugh, and wherever she walked, flowers grew.

Ares, the God of War and the son of Zeus and Hera, was heartily disliked by all the gods and goddesses except Aphrodite, who preferred him to her husband because he was neither lame nor ugly, and Hades, who was glad to receive the souls of those killed in battle. Ares was quarrelsome, worthless, and drunk more often than not. He was a great bully, loved to fight, never needing a reason to do so. But he was not a skillful warrior, just a bloody one, and Athena could always beat him when she wanted to.

Hestia was the sister of Zeus. She was Goddess of Home and Family and never took part in a quarrel among either gods or men. She was worshipped in every home and in every city on the earth, where fires were kept burning for her at all times. Of all the Olympian gods, she was the kindest, the quietest, and the most peaceful.

These twelve gods and goddesses, called the Twelve Great Olympians, were the chief gods of Heaven, but there were three important gods of earth, besides. These were Demeter, Dionysus, and Pan.

Demeter was the third sister of Zeus. She was Goddess of the Grain, who made things grow. But unlike the Olympians, she was not always happy; she was a suffering goddess. Her daughter, Persephone, had once been kidnapped by Hades and taken down to the Underworld to be his queen. Each year she was allowed to return to the Upperworld to visit her mother for six months, and during that time Demeter was so happy that she caused the flowers to bloom and trees to bear fruit. But then Persephone had to return to the Kingdom of the Dead for the next six months, and Demeter was so sorrowful that she let the flowers die and the earth grow bare and brown.

Dionysus was the only god whose parents were not both immortal. Zeus was his father, but his mother was Semele, a mortal princess of Thebes. Dionysus was the God of the Grape Vine, the God of Wine. He was sometimes a god of madness, because of what too much wine can do to men.

The last of the important gods of earth was Pan, the son of Hermes. He was an ugly god, part goat and part man, being a shaggy goat from the waist down and a bearded man from the waist up. He also had goat horns on his head. Naturally, then, he was the God of Shepherds and Goatherds, the god of the woods and the country.

THE SILVER AGE

After the men of the Golden Age had died out, and while the Olympian Gods were still fairly new to Heaven, there sprang up another race of men on earth, the men of the Silver Age. These men were not as blessed as the men who had gone before. They were dissatisfied, they complained a great deal, and they were forgetful of the duties they owed the gods. Sometimes, indeed, they would openly criticize and curse the gods. At last Zeus, who was never patient, could stand it no longer. He called Poseidon to him and ordered him to cause a great flood which would wash every man off the face of the earth.

"Don't spare a one," he said. "They have long since lost all respect for the gods who made them. We shall have to get rid of them and start all over again."

Then Poseidon ordered all the rivers and streams of the earth to rush out of their beds and cover as much land as they could, while Zeus himself sent great torrents of rain down from the skies. It was not long before the whole earth was drowned in the floodwaters, and not a man of the Silver Age was left alive.

THE GODS THEMSELVES

Olympus, the home of the gods, was a tremendously high mountain whose top was up among the clouds. It was a place perfect in every way, where it never rained or snowed and there were no harsh winds. The entrance was a great gate of clouds, kept by the four goddesses called the Seasons. Inside the gate each god had his own separate home, where he ate and slept. But the great meeting place was the palace of Zeus, and the gods and goddesses would often gather there either to discuss important business or merely to be entertained. They often would listen to Apollo, the God of Music, playing on his lyre.

In many ways, the gods lived just as men did. However, they never ate earthly food unless they were visiting the Earth. In Heaven they ate ambrosia and drank nectar, and they were waited on by Hebe, daughter of Zeus and Hera, who was cupbearer to the gods. Athena, who was clever in all the arts, was the master weaver and made all the cloth for the gorgeous robes the immortals wore. Hephaestus was in charge of making weapons and armor for the gods and of building their houses.

The gods would sometimes find a favorite among men and would do all sorts of wonderful things for him. But it did not take much to anger them, and when they were angry they were almost always revengeful. Indeed, they were very much like great spoiled children, fond of having temper tantrums. The only difference, of course, was that the destruction they caused when they did this was terrible, because of their enormous strength. Besides having favorites, each god was the protector of certain groups of people on earth. Zeus, for example, took care of guests and strangers. Being rude or unkind to a stranger was the same thing as being disrespectful to Zeus, and anyone who did this was only asking for a terrible punishment.

Every now and then it happened that a god or goddess would fall in love with a mortal man or woman. In fact, many of the great heroes like Achilles and Heracles that live among men had immortal blood in them. Like men, gods were sometimes made to look foolish, and when this happened men could laugh at them, just as they might laugh at another man. They found the continual quarreling of Zeus and Hera very amusing indeed. At the same time, it was well for them to remember that they owed the gods a great deal of respect and honor. So the gods, except for being immortal--living forever without growing old--and except for being very powerful, were in many ways exactly like men, and by no means perfect.

PROMETHEUS BRINGS FIRE TO MAN

Unlike his cousin Zeus, the great Titan Prometheus never lost his temper when things were not going well. It was his nature to be kind and patient. If he was displeased with something, his first impulse was not to destroy it but to try to correct it.

Whenever he had the chance to help someone, he was more than glad to do so. He had helped Zeus in the war against the Titans, his own people. Years later he had done Zeus another favor by opening up Zeus's skull to relieve the mighty haadache he had before Athena was born. It was not surprising, then, that Prometheus should want to help mankind. But some of the gods, and especially Zeus, regarded this goodwill with suspicion. When Prometheus decided to give man a nobler shape and a better mind than the other animals, since Epimetheus had foolishly given away everything else that was good, he was only trying to make up for man's lack of strength and outer protection.

Although this race of men--the men of the Golden Age--lived and died before Zeus became king of the gods, Prometheus made the men of later ages the same way, and Zeus was not altogether pleased at this.

When he had made the men of the Silver Age, Prometheus thought of another way in which he could help them. Ever since he had helped at Athena's birth, he and this goddess had been great friends, and she had taught him many of the arts and sciences which were her special responsibility as Goddess of Wisdom and of Arts and Crafts. She taught him medicine, architecture, mathematics, and other useful things, and he in turn taught them to men, wishing only to help them better themselves. But instead of being grateful and content, these men grew proud of their accomplishments and their knowledge. And, as is so often the case, even with men today, the more they had, the more they wanted. This enraged Zeus.

"Look what you've done," he said angrily to Prometheus. "If you had taken my advice, you'd have left them alone. But no, you had to go down and teach them things they have no business knowing. Now they think they're so clever they don't need the gods. Well, I'll show them!"

"They only need someone to show them how to use their new knowledge wisely," Prometheus said.

But Zeus would not listen. He brought the Silver Age to an end at once with a great flood. Besides destroying all the men on earth, this flood broke up the great northern land masses which had kept back bitter winds, icy rain, and snow. Now the earth saw something new: a cold season every year. The new men Prometheus had made to take the place of the men of the Silver Age were not equipped for this harsh weather. They suffered and they complained. They could not understand why the gods who had put them on earth refused to help them, and they grew bitter.

"These are no better than the others," said Zeus, scowling blackly. "It's getting to be very tiresome, but there's only one thing to do: get rid of them and try still once more."

But Prometheus was against this.

"You haven't given them a chance," he told Zeus. "Try putting yourself in their place: they're cold and many of them are hungry. And we could do something about that without much trouble, if you would allow it."

"Now you keep out of this," began Zeus, losing his temper as usual, when someone disagreed with him.

Prometheus took no notice of him.

"If they had fire, for instance," he said, "they'd have nothing more to complain about."

"Absolutely not!" shouted Zeus, flying into a terrible rage. "Do you think I don't know what that would mean? Not only would they be able to live in comfort, they would soon discover how to use it to heat metal. They'd have tools and weapons and money in no time. I won't destroy them--yet. But I won't help them either. Let them suffer, it's no more than they deserve."

And he went off muttering,

"Fire indeed!"

Prometheus knew it was no use arguing, for Zeus could never see any side but his own. Still, something had to be done, and at last he decided to take matters into his own hands. He went to Athena and explained how things stood and then he asked her help. She readily agreed, and together they went to the home of Helius, the Sun, where they lit a torch at the great fiery chariot in which he drove across the sky each day. Then, bidding Athena farewell, Prometheus left Mount Olympus, knowing it was forever, and went down to earth, where he gave the fire to man. First he lit a great central fire, and then he set to work teaching men how to start new ones. It wasn't long before a fire was burning in every home.

Back at Olympus the gods were having a great feast, enjoying themselves heartily and paying little attention to what was going on down on earth. Suddenly Hermes came into the hall, bringing news of what Prometheus had just done.

"Not only has he lit fires for men," he told them, "he has shown them how to make fire for themselves by rubbing two sticks together."

As Zeus listened to this his face grew black with anger. But even in his fury he knew that the damage was done; he could not call back the fire. There was now nothing to do but wait and see what use man would make of his newest and greatest gift. But he swore to be revenged on Prometheus.

THE PUNISHMENT OF PROMETHEUS

When Zeus fully realized what Prometheus had done, he flew into a passion of rage. For a while he was so angry he could scarcely speak. As soon as he recovered himself, he ordered Prometheus to be seized and carried to the Caucasian Mountains. There he was bound with unbreakable chains to a huge rock, and a vulture was sent to eat at his liver all day long. Whatever the vulture managed to eat during the day grew back again in the night, so that there was no end to Prometheus' suffering. When this had gone on for some time, Zeus sent Hermes down to Prometheus with a message. Hermes perched on the rock some distance from the clawing of the great vulture, and said, "Father Zeus is more than willing to let you go, on one condition: that you tell him who will be the mother of the child that it is said will someday overthrow him."

Zeus had heard the prophecy that he would one day be overthrown by one of his own children. But only Prometheus, with his power to see into the future, knew who the mother of that child would be.

"Tell him," Hermes said again, "and he will set you free."

But Prometheus only shook his head. He had done many favors for Zeus, and Zeus had not repaid him kindly.

"No," he said at last. "To give in to him now would be as much as admitting that he was right and I was wrong. That is not true. Let him do what he will, but I will not tell him what he wants to know."

When Zeus heard this, he could hardly control his rage. But there was nothing he could do.

PANDORA'S BOX

After a time Zeus decided that if he couldn't make Prometheus talk he could at least take out some of his anger on men. They had, after all, accepted the fire Prometheus gave them. Accordingly, he had Hephaestus make a beautiful creature in the shape of a woman. Each of the gods and goddesses gave her wonderful gifts--music from Apollo, beauty from Aphrodite, cleverness in the arts from Athena, persuasion from Hermes, gentleness from Artemis, and many others. She was therefore called "Pandora" or "All-gifted."

Zeus then sent her to Prometheus' simpleton brother, Epimetheus. Prometheus had warned his brother not to take anything from Zeus, but naturally Epimetheus did not remember this--until it was too late. He was dazzled by Pandora, married her at once, and for a while they were happy. But it was only a short while.

As it happened, when Prometheus and Epimetheus were making the perfect men of the Golden Age, they used only good things and shut all the plagues and mischiefs and sorrows up in a big box. Prometheus kept this box safely for a long time, but as soon as he foresaw that Zeus was about to take revenge on him, he gave the box to his brother, saying,

"The time has come when I can no longer guard this box of evils. I must go away for a long time, and I am going to have to leave the box with you. Now put it in a safe and secret place and guard it well."

Epimetheus assured his brother that he could be trusted.

"Don't worry about a thing," he said heartily. "I'll guard it with my life!"

But, as might have been expected, Epimetheus simply put the box in a corner and forgot about it. When he married Pandora it never occurred to him to warn his bride to keep away from the box. But Pandora, like most of the women who came after her, was extremely curious, and as soon as she saw the box she couldn't rest till she knew what was inside. So one afternoon when Epimetheus was out, she stole quietly to the box and, in great excitement, lifted the lid a crack. In an instant the room was filled with a horrible, buzzing black cloud, as all the loathsome contents escaped into the air. Among them were Old Age, Sickness, Envy, Revenge, Worry, Pain, Greed, Hate, and all the other evils that rob life of beauty and joy and peace. And before Pandora could slam down the lid, the ugly creatures were gone, free to roam the world and plague humankind, which they have done ever since.

From that day forth the lot of mankind has been neither a happy nor an easy one. But Prometheus, foreseeing the day when someone might mistakenly open the lid of the box, had put one good thing inside: Hope. It is this which, even today, helps men bear the sorrows and miseries that he must live with.

DEUCALION AND THE FLOOD

After Pandora had opened the box, the evils which she let go entered into men. They became wicked and hateful, complaining even more than the men of the Silver Age did. They lied and stole and killed. They turned against friends and even against their own families. But worst of all, they forgot to honor the gods. They stopped praying, and indeed the only time they mentioned the gods was when they were hurling curses at them for one reason or another.

When Zeus looked down from Heaven and saw what things had come to, he determined to wipe out the entire race then and there. But Athena said to him,

"Why not wait a while for once before losing your temper? Go down to Earth and have a closer look. Perhaps you will find another, less destructive, way to mend matters."

Zeus said that he doubted it, but he agreed to visit the earth before he did anything to mankind. Disguised as a weary traveler, he made his way from home to home, from city to city. Only in a few places was he taken in, and there he was served the worst food and drink of what the family had to offer -- mouldy bread, spoiled meat, and sour wine. But in most places he was driven from the gates with stones and curses. By the time he returned to Olympus he was so furious that no one --

not even Athena -- could change his mind.

"If only you had seen what I have seen," he shouted to the assembled gods and goddesses, "you would not be so anxious to save the race! This is the worst yet and I've had enough of it! I'm going to finish them off, and I'm going to do it right now!"

And with that he seized a great thunderbolt. But before he could throw it Athena and Apollo caught his arms.

"If your mind is quite made up," Athena said, "then go ahead. Destroy the race. But you'd better not use fire to do it."

Then Apollo reminded him of the prophecy that all creation would one day go up in flame.

"You are right," said Zeus. "There are other ways. Water will do as well as fire."

And calling Poseidon, he ordered him to loose the waters of all the rivers and seas upon the land. He himself sent rain driving down from the skies in great sheets. . Homes and entire cities were swept away or buried beneath the waves. Most of the people were drowned, and those that escaped soon died of hunger. At last the only thing that remained above the water was the topmost peak of Mount Parnassus in northern Greece.

Now it happened that Prometheus had a son named Deucalion,' who had married a woman named Pyrrha, the daughter of Epimetheus and Pandora. These two had managed, in a world full of wickedness and evil, to remain good and god-fearing people. Shortly before the flood Deucalion had journeyed to the Caucasian Mountains to see his father, who was still chained there. It was then that Prometheus had warned his son ofkwhat was about to happen.

"There will be a flood, a great flood," he said gravely, "and this race of men will be wiped out. But I think that if we are clever, Father Zeus will spare you and your wife, for you are different from the others; you have not behaved as they have."

Then Prometheus told his son to build a large wooden chest and store it with food, and then to get inside with Pyrrha. Thus it happened that, after it had rained and stormed violently for nine days and nine nights, it suddenly stopped, and a big wooden chest came floating over the water and bumped into the top of Mount Parnassus -- the only dry land on earth. The lid opened, and out stepped Deucalion and Pyrrha. Although they were both badly frightened by their experience, they at once fell to their knees and gave thanks to the gods for having saved their lives. When Zeus heard this he took pity on them and caused the waters to slowly go down. Seeing more and more dry land appear, Deucalion and Pyrrha began to explore their surroundings and before long they came to what had once been a temple of Themis, the Titan goddess of justice. They went in, picking their way among the muck and ruins left by the great flood. No fire burned on the altar, but they began to pray.

"O Themis," they said, "if anything may be done to bring back life to the earth, tell us what is is. We will gladly do it."

Then the goddess spoke to them:

"Go out of my temple. Cover your heads with veils. Then cast the bones of your mother behind you."

At this Deucalion and Pyrrha were greatly troubled. In the first place, they each had a different mother. In the second place, their mothers were both dead and buried far away. And even if this were not true, they knew that mistreatment of the dead -- such as molesting their bones angered Zeus almost more than anything else. But at last Deucalion thought of something.

"It means Mother Earth," he said excitedly. "She is the mother of everything.

"But what about her bones?" asked Pyrrha.

"Stones," Deucalion answered.

And with that they veiled their heads and set about picking up stones and tossing them over their shoulders. As they did this the stones softened, became warm, and took on human shape, becoming men or women, depending on whether they were dropped by Deucalion or by Pyrrha. And in this way a new race of men was begun.

PHAETHON

Phaethon's mother was named Clymene. Some say she was a mortal woman, some say she was a nymph. But it is agreed that Phaethon's father was the son of the Titan Hyperion; Helius, the Sun himself. For a long time Phaethon did not know who his father was, and his friends often teased him because of this. At last he went to his mother and begged her to tell him the name of his father.

"Very well, my son," Clymene said, "it is time you knew, for your father is a very great person and you should be proud to be his son. He is Helius, the Sun, who lives in a magnificent, golden palace behond the eastern edge of the world. Each day he drives his fiery chariot across the sky, giving light to the world. And each night he drops into the western sea, where a boat takes him around the River Ocean to his palace in the east. You have seen him often, but you did not know he was your own father."

Phaethon was both surprised and delighted to hear this. At once he went and told his friends. But they only laughed and teased him more than before. At this Phaethon was very angry.

"Mother," he said one day, "I am going to go and see the Sun at his palace. My friends will not believe he is really my father. Perhaps he can give me some proof, so that they will stop laughing at me."

So Phaethon set out, with his mother's blessing, for the eastern edge of the world. As he travelled the sky grew brighter and brighter until at last he was standing before the most radiant palace he had ever seen. Everything sparkled and shone and glittered so brightly that he had to shade his eyes with his hand. Slowly he made his way inside and toward the great throne room. The Sun was sitting on a glorious shining throne with a crown of dazzling light upon his head. Phaethon squinted hard, for the brightness nearly blinded him, and approached the throne.

"Helius," he began as bravelyaas he could, "my mother has told me that I am your son. If this is true, I am very proud indeed. Buyall my friends laugh at me and think I am not telling the truth. That is why I am here: if I am your son, kI beg you to give me some proof of it."

At this Helius smiled, and said,

"Yes, it is true. You are my son, and the grandson of Hyperion, the first God of Light. And if my words are not enough to convince you, ask a gift -- whatever you want most -- and it shall be yours. This I swear by the River Styx.

Phaethon did not hesitate a moment. He knew exactly what he wanted.

"Father," he said, "let me drive your chariot for just one day. Even before I knew I was your son I wanted to do that, and now at least my wish has come true."

As soon as he heard that, Helius was sorry for his foolish promise, for he knew that no one but himself could drive that fiery chariot without being destroyed.

"My son, my son," he said, sadly shaking his bright head. "You do not know what it is you ask. It would be the end of you for certain, for not even great Zeus can manage that chariot and those horses. They are wild and dangerous and the road is longer and steeper than you think. I beg you to choose something else."

"No," said Phaethon stubbornly, "this is the only thing I want; if I can't have it, I don't want anything, and I shall have to return without any proof that you are really my father."

For a long time Helius pleaded with him. He knew that his only hope was to make Phaethon change his mind. Simply to refuse to grant his request was out of the question, for he had sworn by the sacred River Styx, that runs through the Underworld, and not even the gods could break that kind of oath.

"Phaethon," he said in despair, "you only came here for proof that I am indeed your father. Do you not find my fears for your safety the best proof you could have?"

But Phaethon would not give in, and at last it was too late to argue any more. Dawn was already strewing the eastern sky with roses and the Morning Star was leading the other stars home to rest. Sadly Helius took his son by the hand and led him to where the great fire-breathing horses, pawing and stamping in their impatience to be off, were hitched to the shining chariot. Phaethon climbed in, more excited than he had ever been before, and took the reins.

"Now," Helius said, "you must stay in the path which you will see before you. kRemember that the horses will be hard to hold, but you must not for any reason let go of the reins. This whole adventure is against my will," he sighed. "Is there still nothing I can say to make you change your mind?"

There was nothing. So at last the bars were let down and before Phaethon knew what was happening, he found himself streaking across the sky far above the earth. The horses knew at once that something was different; their load was lighter and the reins were not held as firmly as usual. They went faster and faster, swerving from side to side, and terrifying their young driver.

"I can't guide them," he thought in sudden panic. "My father was right!"

He forgot what he was doing and let go of the reins. Then the horses went completely wild. First they charged up and up, nearly setting the clouds on fire. Next they plunged toward the earth, scorching trees off mountain tops, drying up rivers and streams, setting whole cities ablaze. The world was on fire! Phaethon could not see this, for the smoke was so thick it blinded him. Hot cinders blew against him, burning every inch of his body. No words can describe the terror he felt.

Finally Mother Earth, charred and smoking, cried out in pain to Zeus,

"Look! Don't you see what is happening? I am burning now, but Heaven will be next unless you do something quickly."

Zeus, awakened from a nap by the smell of smoke, heard Mother Earth's cry and saw that there was no time to lose. Seizing a thunderbolt, and throwing Helius a sorrowful glance, he aimed and hurled it. The lightning hit its mark. Phaethon was killed instantly and fell to earth, blazing like a shooting star. The river Eridanus caught him, put out the fire, and cooled his charred and blistered body. He was buried nearby by some tenderhearted nymphs.

When his sisters, also children of the Sun, came to visit his grave, they wept so wildly that the gods took pity on them and changed them into poplar trees, which even now weep amber-colored tears in memory of their daring but rash brother, Phaethon.

HERACLES

Heracles, the son of Zeus and a mortal woman named Alcmena was the strongest man in the world. In fact he was so strong that he came to think of himself as being almost like the gods. But there were two important differences. In the first place, although nothing on earth could kill or even harm him, the power of the gods was still greater than his own. And in the second place, although his great physical strength was matched by a great heart, it was in no way matched by a great mind. He was not a clever thinker and he often made disastrous mistakes. But afterwards he was so sorry and so willing to do anything to make up for them that people could not help but forgive him.

His mother Alcmena lived in Thebes and was the wife of Amphitryon, a great Theban general. She was not merely another of the many mortal women with whom Zeus just happened to fall in love. Rather, Zeus was looking for an ideal woman to be the mother of the child who would someday be the hero of the world. Alcmena was the one he finally chose, and he appeared to her in the form of her husband, so that she suspected nothing. When she gave birth to Heracles, she at the same time gave birth to another baby, Iphicles, who was the son of her husband Amphitryon. It was naturally thought that the babies were twins, and the difference was not discovered until later.

When Hera found out about this, she was furiously jealous, as usual, and there sprang up within her a great hatred of Heracles which lasted as long as he lived on earth. Then and there she determined to send upon him a long line of troubles. Her first chance came late one night when she looked down from Olympus and saw that Alcmena had put her children in their cradle and had gone to bed herself. The house was dark and quiet. Seeing this, Hera called forth two huge serpents with shiny blue scales and fire darting from their eyes.

"Go down to Thebes," she said, "to the house of Amphitryon the general. Go into the nursery and see that you don't come back till you have destroyed the larger of the two babies you will find sleeping there."

At once the serpents obeyed. But no sooner had they raised their horrible heads above the cradle than the babies awoke. Iphicles screamed in terror, but Heracles reached out, put a hand around the neck of each serpent, and strangled the life out of them as easily as he might scoop up a handful of pebbles. His mother, hearing a scream from the nursery, came as fast as she could, but by the time she got there the danger was past and she found Heracles sitting up in bed, laughing and playing with the long, limp, blue coils of the dead serpents.

As Heracles grew older, it became clear that the thing in which he was chiefly lacking was self-control. Like his father Zeus, it took very little to make him lose his temper. Once when he lost patience with his music teacher, he hit the man with his lyre -- a natural anough reaction-- but because of his tremendous strength, the blow killed the teacher. Another time he accidentally killed a young boy who was serving him at a feast by stretching out his arm without first looking to see if there was anyone in the way. After a few of these incidents his foster father, Amphitryon, sent him off to a cattle ranch where he would be less likely to cause trouble -- accidental or otherwise.

When Heracles was eighteen years old he left the ranch and returned to Thebes, where he found a war raging between the Thebans and the neighboring Minyans. At once Heracles threw himself into the battle and before very long long he had managed to put the enemy to flight. At this the Theban king was so grateful that he gave Heracles the hand of his daughter Megara in marriage.

Because he was Zeus's son and a great hero, he was favored by most of the other gods, and when he was married they gave him gifts: a sword from Hermes, a bow and arrows from Apollo, a team of horses from Poseidon, a golden breast-plate from Athena, a helmet from Hephaestus, and from Zeus a wonderful unbreakable shield. But in spite of these gifts, Heracles rarely wore armor, and as for weapons, he preferred the huge clubs which he cut himself from wild olive trees.

Hera, as might be expected, gave him nothing. She had never forgotten her hatred of him, and when he had been married only long enough for his wife to bear him three strong sons she suddenly and without warning drove him insane. The madness lasted only a short while, but it was long enough. One moment he and his wife and children were sitting together talking happily of this and that, and the next moment Heracles leaped up, his eyes blazing crazily, and with a mighty roar seized his sons and then his wife and tore them limb from limb. The instant this was done he came to his senses again and could not believe his eyes.

"Oh, what can have happened?" he cried. "Who has done this bloody deed?"

He could not remember doing it himself. When he learned the truth he was beside himself with horror.

"Then I must be punished," he said, weeping bitterly, "and I shall punish myself. I did not know what I was doing, but it is no excuse. I have committed the worst crime a man can commit. Here I stand, covered with the blood of the ones I loved best. And here they lie at my feet!"

And with that he rushed into his room and locked himself in, swearing to kill himself in the most horrible way he could think of. Several days later, however, he reappeared and announced that he was going to Apollo's oracle at Delphi to find out what punishment the gods wished him to have.

"If you wish to be forgiven for what you have done," the priestess at Delphi told him, "you must go to your cousin Eurystheus, King of Mycenae, and do whatever he asks of you. For what you have done is a terrible thing and the gods are greatly displeased with you."

Heracles obeyed at once, and the tasks which Eurystheus set him are what Heracles is most famous for. They became known as the Twelve Labors of Heracles. Among them are the killing of the Lernian Hydra, the cleaning of the Augean Stables, the fetching of the huge and terrible three-headed dog Cerberus from the Underworld, and the quest for the Golden Apples of the Hesperides.

The Lernian Hydra was the offspring of two repulsive monsters, one a creature with a hundred heads, and the other a half-woman, half-serpent. The Hydra itself had a huge dog-like body, nine heads, of which one was immortal, and a foul, poisonous breath. It had been brought up by Hera, who meant to use it one day to destroy Heracles. It lived in a swamp in Lerna. Eurystheus ordered Heracles to go to Lerna and kill the Hydra.

Taking his nephew Iolaus, son of his half-brother Iphicles, along as his charioteer, Heracles set forth and soon came to the Hydra's den. He first shot several flaming arrows into the cave to enrage the Hydra, and before long the hideous monster rushed out, all nine heads hissing furiously. k Heracles approached, holding his breath, and began to attack the Hydra with his great olivewood club, trying to smash all nine of the heads. He dodged about, retreating a little every now and then to get a breath of fresh air. His blows were so powerful that each time he hit a head, he knocked it off the ugly neck and sent it rolling like a ball. But soon he discovered that whenever he knocked off a head, two new heads grew in place of the one he had knocked off, and both snapped at him with their poisonous fangs. Then Heracles lost his temper.

"Now I've had enough," he shouted. "I haven't got all day. Here," he said to Iolaus, "bring me some burning branches and let's have done with this."

Iolaus did as he was told, and Heracles, his club in one hand and a firebrand in the other, first struck off a head and then quickly burned the root so that it could not grow again. When he had finally knocked off all the other heads he smashed off the head that was immortal and buried it beneath a large rock.

Eurystheus was far from pleased with Heracles' success at performing almost impossible tasks he set for him. He found himself wishing to give him a task which would be not only difficult but disgusting and humiliating as well. At last he though of just the thing. Augeas, King of Elis, had the largest cattle herds in the world -- thousands and thousands of cattle. But their stables had not been cleaned out for many years, and although the cattle themselves were not troubled by this, the neighboring countryside was rank with the smell. Eurystheus told Heracles of this, saying,

"You must clean these stables, and what's more, you have only one day in which to do it."

And Eurystheus laughed to himself at the thought of Heracles, up to his knees in the filth, shoveling away as if his life depended upon it.

But Heracles was not in the least discouraged. He went straight to the Augean Stables and looked over the situation. Then, having thought of a solution, he made two openings in the walls, and set to work channeling off two nearby rivers so that they would run through the stables and wash out all the filth. When this was done he returned the rivers to their proper channels and went back to Eurystheus, well pleased with himself. He had cleaned the stables in one day without actually having touched the filth. Eurystheus was very angry that his scheme had not worked out, and after a time he found another task for Heracles, an extremely dangerous one which would carry him down into the Underworld, where Hades ruled the Dead.

"I want you to fetch me Cerberus," He said. "Go down to the Underworld and bring him back here. I want to see him."

Cerberus was the terrifying three-headed dog who guarded the entrance to the Kingdom of the Dead. He allowed all dead souls to enter, but permitted none to come out again. By this time, Heracles was very weary from his Labors; kand Zeus, seeing this, sent Athena and Hermes to be his guides and companions. They descended into the darkness of the Underworld with him and sought out its grim ruler, Hades, where he sat on a great black throne beside his wife Persephone. Heracles spoke to him boldly.

"I have come," he said, "for your dog. I must take him to the upper world. This has been required of me and I have no choice."

"If you can do what you propose to do," Hades answered after a long silence, "using nothing but your bare hands, then you have my permission to try."

"Very well," said Heracles, "just as you wish."

And with that he went to where the dog was chained. The monster leaped furiously at him, snarling and snapping with three great heads, foam dripping from his mouths. But Heracles strode boldly up to him, and seized him by the neck, choking him with his powerful grasp. Cerberus snarled and growled savagely from his three mouths and gnashed his three sets of teeth, but in the end he wore himself out and Heracles was able to carry him, chains and all, back to the upper world and to Eurystheus.

As soon as Eurystheus saw that Heracles actually had the monster on his back and was coming near the throne, he was terrified.

"Get him out of here," he shouted. "Yes, yes, I can see that you've brought him, just as I asked. Now take him back! I don't want him!

So Heracles had to make the journey to the Underworld a second time and return Cerberus to Hades.

Perhaps the most difficult of the Twelve Labors was the search for the Golden Apples of the Hesperides. Besides being difficult, this task led Heracles into other adventures along the way. The Apples themselves had been Hera's wedding gift from Mother Earth, and Hera had later given them to the Hesperides to guard. The Hesperides were the beautiful daughters of the Titan Atlas, who had been doomed by Zeus to stand on a lofty mountain forever and hold up the enormous weight of the sky on his great shoulders.

"Bring the Apples to me," ordered Eurystheus, "don't come back without them or it will go hard with you."

Heracles set off at once, but because he did not know where the Apples were to be found, he first went to consult the ancient sea-god Nereus, who was also a prophet. Heracles found him asleep on the shore, and without delay he seized him and would not let go, even though the god began at once to change shapes, turning into one frightening beast after another. But at last he gave up and agreed to tell Heracles where the Golden Apples were and how they could be gained.

"The Hesperides are the daughters of the Titan Atlas," Nereus said. "They live in a beautiful garden belonging to Hera, which lies at the very western edge of the world. You can go there yourself, but if you take my advice, you will instead go to Atlas and ask him as a favor to get the Apples for you. He will do so if you will in the meantime hold up the sky for him"

Heracles thanked Nereus and went straight to the mountain where Atlas stood, his huge shoulders bowed beneath the enormous weight of the heavens, his shaggy head wreathed in clouds.

"Atlas!" Heracles shouted to him. "I am Heracles, son of Zeus. I have been commanded to fetch the Golden Apples of the Hesperides for King Eurystheus, and it is Apollo's will that I obey."

Atlas shrugged his shoulders slightly, shaking the sky a little and dislodging several stars which fell as flaming meteors to the earth below.

"Not even a son of Zeus can get the Apples of the Hesperides," said Atlas in a slow, heavy voice that rolled about the mountain like thunder. "Only I, a Titan and the father of the Hesperides themselves, can get them."

"Well," said Heracles, "if you will do this for me, I will hold up the sky for you while you go to the Garden. Probably you would like a little exercise after standing in one spot for so many centuries."

Atlas at once agreed, and Heracles, striding up the mountain till he stood beside Atlas on the summit, braced his powerful legs and carefully shifted the weight of the sky onto his own shoulders.

Atlas, relieved of his burden stretched himself mightily and said,

"What a wonderful feeling it is to stand straight again and move around!"

"Don't forget our bargain," said Heracles uneasily. "You had better get started for the Garden."

So Atlas, grumbling a little, strode off toward the western edge of the world, covering miles at each stride. Quickly he was out of sight, and Heracles settled the sky more firmly on his shoulders and waited.

Several days later Atlas's great form could be seen again in the West, rapidly growing larger as he came near.

"Well," said Heracles, as he eyed the three beautiful Golden Apples that he saw in Atlas's hand, "I'm glad you are finally back! This load is getting too heavy, even for me. Now, if you will come up alongside me for a moment, we can trade places again and I can take the Apples to Eurystheus.

"Oh ho!" said Atlas. "Not so fast, my friend. I haven't tasted freedom for hundreds of years, and I won't give it up so easily as you may think. *I* will take the Apples to Eurystheus and you, my fine friend, can stay right where you are."

On hearing this, Heracles became furious. But for once in his life he saw that he would have to control his temper. This was one time when his great strength was of no use to him. He would have to try trickery.

"If that is the way it must be," he said, as calmly as possible, "very well, then, I agree. But would you be so kind as to take the sky back for just a moment while I put a pad on my shoulders? They are not used to so heavy a burden."

Atlas saw no harm in this and took back the sky. But the instant he had done so, Heracles picked up the Apples and was gone from sight before the Titan knew what had happened.

On his way back to Eurystheus, Heracles passed through the land of King Antaeus of Libya. This king, a son of Poseidon and Mother Earth, would waylay passers-by and challenge them to a wrestling match. But this was a trick, for whenever Antaeus touched the earth he gained strength, and so he always overthrew his opponents and then killed them and used their skulls to help tile the roof of a temple he was building to his father Poseidon. No sooner had he seen Heracles than he challenged him to a match and Heracles accepted. But they had not been struggling together long when Heracles noticed Antaeus purposely falling down on the ground without being knocked down, and getting up with fresh strength.

"Aha! So that's it," he thought.

And suddenly he picked Antaeus up, held him off the ground until he was as weak as a baby, and then killed him easily.

A little farther on he came to the Caucasian Mountains, where Prometheus was still chained and still tortured by the great vulture which was feeding on his liver. Heracles looked on him with pity, for he had heard of this great Titan's suffering, and he decided to do something about it. Drawing his bow, he shot and killed the monstrous bird. Then he ripped apart the chains and set Prometheus free. After this Heracles had no more trouble, but returned straight to Mycenae and gave Eurystheus the Golden Apples he had asked for.

It was some time after he had completed the Twelve Labors that Heracles fell in love with a young girl named Deianira. k As it happened, the ugly but powerful river-god Achelous was also in love with her, and took every opportunity to insult Heracles. At first Heracles ignored these taunts as well as he could, but there came a day when he could stand it no more. Taking his huge club, he gave Achelous such a terrible beating that it was all he could do to drag himself home. Then Heracles was free to marry Deianira.

As they were traveling about the country after their wedding, they came to the river Evenus, where the Centaur Nessus offered to carry Deianira across. Centaurs were a race of beings who looked like men from the head to the waist but had the body and legs of a great horse. Heracles accepted Nessus's offer, put his wife on the Centaur's back, and swam across the river himself. But as he reached the other side he heard Deianira scream, and looked up to see Nessus trying to run away with her. Heracles snatched up his bow and put an arrow into Nessus's heart. The Centaur groaned and fell over on the bank, but before he died, he whispered to Deianira,

"Save some of my blood. It works as a love charm. Use it if you ever think your husband no longer loves you." So while Heracles was not looking she filled a little vial with the blood of Nessus and hid it to use in the future if she needed it.

Heracles and Deianira were happily married for many years but by and by Deianira grew jealous, especially of some of the women prisoners Heracles sent home when he was fighting in wars. At last she decided the time had come to use Nessus's charm. She rubbed some of the blood on a new robe and gave it to Heracles. But no sooner had he put the robe on than he felt as if he were on fire. His skin began to blister and turn black; his flesh started to burn. The pain was more than he could bear. Deianira, as soon as she saw how cruelly Nessus had tricked her, was so horrified at what she had unintentionally done to her husband that she hanged herself.

Heracles, in the meantime, rushed about like a madman, howling in agony and trying to tear off the robe. But it stuck fast and he only succeeded in pulling large pieces of flesh from his bones. When he saw that he must die, he ordered a great funeral pyre to be built on the very top of Mount Oeta. When it was ready, he climbed on and cried out for the fire to be lit, for he was ready to welcome death and end his suffering. But no one could bring himself to light the pyre until a young shepherd, passing by, took pity on Heracles and put a torch to it. In gratitude Heracles gave him his bow and arrows. The shepherd's name was Philoctete and he made good and noble use of the gift of Heracles some years later in the Trojan War.

As the pyre went up in flame, a great cloud of smoke arose, and, hidden by this cloud, Zeus lifted his son up to Olympus. Hera was bitter at first, but in time she forgot her hatred of Heracles and even went so far as to let him marry her daughter Hebe. Thus began Heracles' life among the immortals and ended his life on earth, where he was worshipped soon after his death as one of the gods.

Norse Stories

"The Making of the World"

(For selection beginning "Eight hundred years ago...." and ending "...and the woman Embla." see Hamilton Wright Mabie's "The Making of the World" from Norse Stories Retold From the Eddas, New York, Dodd, Mead, & Co., 1930, pp. 1-12.)

"Hymer's Caldron"

(For selection beginning "Aegir, the sea God, lay on the rocks...." and ending "...perish himself in its poisoned jaws." see Olivia E. Coolidge's "Hymer's Caldron"from Legends of the North, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1951.)

"The Fenris Wolf"

(For selection beginning "Though Loki, the fire god,...." and ending "...earth would perish utterly." see Olivia E. Coolidge's "The Fenris Wolf" from Legends of the North, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1951.)

"Thor and the Giant King"

(For selection beginning "Thor and Loki in a goat-drawn chariot...." and ending "...the long, dusty plains to the sea." see Olivia E. Coolidge's "Thor and the Giant King" from Legends of the North, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1951.)

"Baldur, the Beautiful"

(For selection beginning "Arise, great prophetess!...." and ending "...light of a brighter sun." see Olivia E. Coolidge's"Baldur,the Beautiful" from Legends of the North, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1951.)

"The Twilight of the Gods"

(For selection see Padriac Colum's "The Twilight of the Gods" from The Children of Odin, The MacMillan Company, 1920, beginning "Snow fell on the four quarters...." and ending "...spread themselves over the earth.", pp. 276-282.)

"The Beginning of the Skagit World"

(For selection beginning "In the beginning, Raven and Mink,...." and ending "...change, we do not know." see Ella E. Clark's "The Beginning of the Skagit World" from Indian Legends of the Pacific Northwest, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1953, pp. 139-141.)

"How Coyote Made the Columbia River"

(For selection beginning "Long ago, when Coyote...." and ending "...up and down the river there." see Ella E. Clark's "How Coyote Made the Columbia River" from Indian Legends of the Pacific Northwest, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1953, p. 88.)

"The Bridge of the Gods"

(For selection beginning "Long ago, when the world was young,...." and ending "...known as the Cascades of the Columbia." see Ella E. Clark's "The Bridge of the Gods" from Indian Legends of the Pacific Northwest, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1953, pp. 21-22.)

"How the People Got the Sun"

(For selection beginning "Robert E. Lee, a Quillayute,...." and ending "...but he is no more." see Ella E. Clark's "How the People Got the Sun" from Indian Legends of the Pacific Northwest, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1953, pp. 151-152.)

"How Coyote Brought Fire to the People"

(For selection beginning "At the beginning of the world,...." and ending "...they heated their houses." see Ella E. Clark's "How Coyote Brought Fire to the People" from Indian Legends of the Pacific Northwest, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1953, pp. 187-189.)

"How Beaver Stole the Fire"

(For selection beginning "In the early days...." and ending "...we can get it from wood." see Ella E. Clark's "How Beaver Stole the Fire" from Indian Legends of the Pacific Northwest, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1953, pp. 189-192.)

"Mount Shasta and the Great Flood"

(For selection beginning "The Indians of the Pacific Northwest...." and ending "...animal people on the earth." see Ella E. Clark's "Mount Shasta and the Great Flood" from Indian Legends of the Pacific Northwest, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1953, p. 12.)